

CLASS WAR



Issue 82 £1
Winter 2001

NO WAR BUT THE CLASS WAR...



THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE

News, views, war, sex, hospitalised coppers and much, much more!

The USA's Frankstein's Monster

The scenes as they emerged in New York were literally unbelievable, they looked like scenes from a fiction, from a blood and gore Hollywood spectacular. It took time for the realisation that within these burning collapsing buildings and around the surrounding streets, ordinary people were being crushed and burned and suffocated in their thousands. The attacks had been planned to coincide at 0900 a time when the maximum number of people would be at the centres and the streets would be grid locked with morning traffic. The building's as centres of administration of the State machine, as symbols of American Imperialism were strategic but the American people themselves en-mass were equally the intended target.



Support for the Palestinians is worldwide

In the 1960s Muhammed Ali said that the (black) people of America had no argument with the Vietcong as "No Viet Cong ever called me a nigger" - Islamic fundamentalism has murdered six thousand Americans. No state, no society - imperialistic or peoples' republic - could ignore such attacks. Our answer is the only answer possible - international Class War.

We are revolted by the loss of the life, unequivocally and unconditionally revolted and appalled. However this incident cannot be staged managed by Blair and Bush into some kind of imperialist bandwagon, which can now roll on through the world enforcing their equally horrific agenda on the back of the carnage, and sowing still more seeds of destruction, which like September's attack will have the potential of reaping whirlwinds of still more death and devastation in return.

Blair's absurd attempt to gather "the British people" into the conflict and try and send throughout the country a feeling of fear and involvement by flight bans and travel blocks, tear jerking phone in's, sombre faced minute by minute news reports etc. are preparation for a widespread and probable indiscriminate revenge attack involving British forces.

Blair's attempt to make this a war between "democrats versus terrorists" ignores the fact that these attacks were not indiscriminate, they could not just as well have been made against New Zealand or Oslo, they were tightly targeted on the USA (and may yet also be targeted on Britain.) Why? Can anyone say they don't know why America and possibly in future Britain?

Despite the horror of the attack it must be said that this was *retaliation*, bloodthirsty and disproportionate, but retaliation and revenge for decades of American (and British) bombing of cities around the world, and in particular the Muslim world. Libya, Sudan, and of course almost daily Iraq, have seen US and British bombers with untouchable unstoppable fire power devastate cities and massacre innocent civilians just like

the ones in New York.

Closer to home Belgrade was devastated until the Serbian people came en masse to stand on their own bridges daring the British and Americans to bomb them.

More than 2 million Iraqi people, mainly women and children have died in recent years as a result of bombs, disease and starvation caused by the US imposed sanctions. American foreign policy (and therefore most of Britain's) in the Islamic world has centred around support for Saudi Arabia, whose ruling class is an Islamic totalitarian royal dictatorship - as well as support for Pakistan's government which at present is an Islamified military dictatorship - both these reigns have used the most backward elements of Islam for social control. It's no coincidence that Saudi Arabia is where Al Quada gets most of its money and recruits.

Double standards everywhere abound, Israel is given an exemption to carry on the most vulgar forms of imperialism and genocide, whilst the United Nations is rendered impotent by the veto of the US and Britain every time the subject is raised. Racism, apartheid and slavery can be

discussed globally but when Israel is agendered the US walks out. The USA hasn't championed democracy even on its terms and at every hand has vetoed the whole of the United Nations in defence of the terrorist state of Israel.

Whatever America and her British supporters launch it will not be a war against terrorism, only the particular terrorists they do not like.

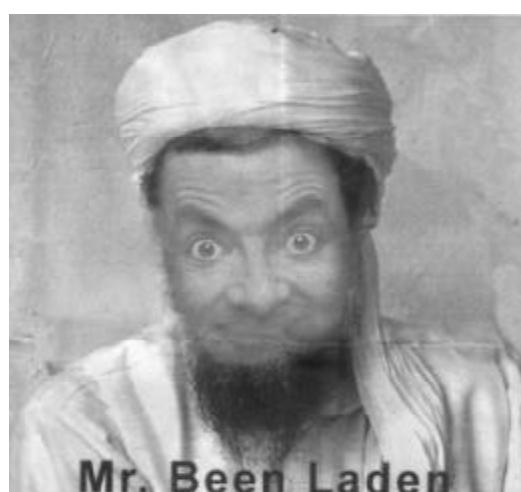
It will not be a war in defence of 'democracy' except the sort that ignores the views of Asians, Africans, Arabs and Latin Americans. America does not represent 'civilisation' if by that it is meant people of different social and political and religious traditions who reject 'the American way' are ipso facto 'uncivilised'. The genuine horror of people world wide, against mass murder must not be itself high jacked by public relations departments cheer leading US Foreign Policy.

Perhaps the powers that be in the US state have become so gorged on their own apparent unmatched power, so unquestionably superior now that the so called Soviet Union has collapsed that they are *the march of God through the world*. Perhaps in their arrogance they thought these situations would carry on without massive reaction. For so

long they have scared themselves with nightmares of one of many third world countries or resistance groups gaining some weapons of mass destruction, that they scoured the world looking for atom bombs and germ war capacities, forgetting the first rule of guerrilla strategy, to use *the enemies weapons*.

It has long been a fact that it would not be some crude missile which would hit America, but a man carrying a small suitcase with a high explosive device. If one could crash even a small plane into a nuclear power station it is unnecessary to develop a nuclear strike capacity of your own, America is full of them.

In this context just how can Blare and Bush root out 'terrorism' so this can never happen again? The truth is while there is injustice and oppression and people are denied basic rights to be heard, and without that, injustice is organised into a political and social movement, someone somewhere will always be capable of striking back, and frequently as we have seen here and in Ireland often without thought for innocent causalities or fear of killing ordinary people.



The only way to stop terrorism is to end *the causes of terrorism*. So who did the deed? Almost certainly it is related to the Middle East for the reasons outlined above and many more unstated. The spectre of Afghanistan and the Saudi

dissident Bin Laden raises still more gluts of hypocrisy, these "extremist fundamentalists" were trained, armed, equipped and funded by the American CIA and British special forces.

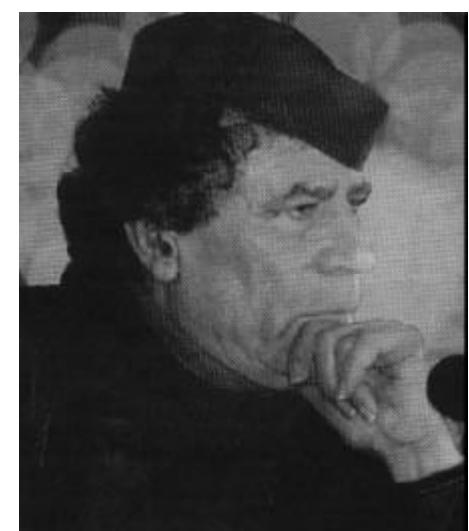
They were hailed as "freedom fighters" in the 1980s as they attacked the modest social and sexual progress being made by the left leaning Afghan military government. They were portrayed as the David fighting the Russian Goliath as they decapitated and tortured Soviet soldiers. These were at that time Britain's "democrats" they were on "our side" at that time. Most despicable of all was the direct manipulation of the British media to reinforce this message.

The ITN newscaster Sandy Gall lived amongst the Afghan mujahadeen for months at a time and filed glowing reports for British television (and probably MI6). The evil Soviets were defeated and the western media went home. The cure turned out to be worse than the disease. Millions of people have since voted with their feet, desperate to escape from the



George W and Mr Tony

Islamic regimes in Iran, Afghanistan and other countries, yet ITN and others backed up and went home. That Islamic fundamentalism has even less to offer the world than its Christian counterparts can be seen on the desperate faces of the men,



Yesterdays bogeyman - Colonel Gaddafi

women and children trying to get out of these countries in recent years and live in dignity elsewhere.

Odd, isn't it. Now all over the world little chickens are flapping their wings and looking to come home to roost. The potential to ratchet this whole nightmare up another few notches and take the world nearer the edge is very close. If Bush goes on some "take no prisoners" crusade and launches a blood bath against the whole Arab and Muslim world, with Blair and Israel baying at his side, we can expect decades of similar attacks and counter attacks. This will end up pervading more and more levels of society and dividing countries and people globally on religious and ethnic grounds in a way never seen before.

The alternative, short of a socialist world - and that is the only real tangible alternative - is for the US to reassess its role in the Middle East and seek an honourable and just settlement. It requires actually listening to the Arab world. That would require a major shift in US foreign policy which is probably outwith the capacity of George W. That being the case the storm clouds are likely to get much darker in the coming days and years.

Once that happens the actual issues and causes of the problem will get lost in the politics of the last bullet bomb or atrocity. We must be clear not to get drawn into this, these wars are not in the interest of the working class. The working class world wide are brother and sisters, we have a world to share in equality, mutual respect and justice.

It will require the citizens of the United States themselves tearing down the Pentagon and centres of international capitalism and imperialism. It will require the Jewish and Palestinian working class standing *together* against racist, supremacist, and fundamentalist ideologies. It requires those crushed by the Taliban to rise up.

Most importantly it requires us all to stand aside from state manipulation and hypocrisy.



I Could N't

In yet another vain attempt to increase recruitment to the police, various celebrities and sports stars have been recruited to the televised "I Could N't" adverts. When it comes to police careers, it's not surprising that the cops prefer to turn to celebrities rather than the examples provided by their own officers. Whilst media attention was focused on the plight of the anti-capitalist demonstrators returning from Genoa, the Daily Mail (!) published video stills showing police brutality alive and kicking in Wakefield, Yorkshire, after a local resident filmed a police officer kicking and punching a man before arresting him. The class war does not just happen at every summit of world leaders and their authoritarian travelling circus. The enemy is with us every breathing day, and a lot closer to home than Genoa! Class War is pleased to report that the clobbering bobby of Clavendon Street has been moved to a safe house after some class conscious soul with a strong sense of justice smashed the windows on his house!

Not So Canny

Our favourite poster of the 2001 election has to be the Conservative's "You Paid The Tax - Where Are The Police?" In Liverpool, not an area the Tories know well, this was placed in a prominent location where it could be seen in all its splendour by thousands of people every day - directly opposite Merseyside Constabulary Headquarters in Canning Place. As the building is only eight storey's high, it was perhaps easy for the Tories to miss!

United Nations?

Anyone wondering whether racism served any ideological purpose for the champions of capital in our "globalised" world should have been left in little doubt after the farce of the UN world conference on racism. The idea of the conference was, straightforwardly, to deliver a bland statement, agreed by all participating states, to the effect that racism was an "evil" which all "world leaders" unequivocally denounced. Logically, therefore, racism would no longer be the property of those "world leaders" - all now self-declared anti racists - but only now the currency of a thuggish minority outside the ambit of "civil society". The problem for the UN though was, that, come the day, the reliance of the major players upon either direct oppression or racist manipulation to secure their rule was such that the declaration was effectively scuppered. The European states would not play ball if Zionism was equated with racism. India too if casteism was so compared. The US would allow no discussion of reparations for US profit from slavery. China would allow no discussion of its role in Tibet. The "rainbow coalition" collapsed.

Corrections

In Class War 81 we reviewed the excellent *Coal Was Our Life* by Royce Turner. We should have said that the book is published by Sheffield Hallam University NOT Sheffield University Press. Whoops.

If They Had Brains They Would Be Dangerous!

Welcome to the easiest column to write in the whole paper, our regular round up of police intelligence!

City of London Police

Let's start with the lions of J18, City Police. Our commiseration's go out to PC Norman Ladzrie, who is suing his former employers after an unfortunate incident on a self-defence course. Whilst well trained in the art of defence against knife attacks, PC Ladzrie was not so accustomed to having a 17 stone instructor fall on him whilst armed with a rubber knife, and has been invalided out of the force with spinal injuries. Looks like we will all have to fatten up a bit in



"Piss off, copper" ...

time for the next May Day demonstrations.

Fife Constabulary

After a hard day shuffling paper in the office what better for a senior police officer to do than pursue his hobby. One person who pursues his hobby with vigour is Chief Inspector Robin Lumsden, who is well known in Fife for having published 14 books on Nazi uniforms and regalia. Before slipping out of one uniform and into another, CI Lumsden can be spotted driving home with his own personalised number plate on his car - N5DAP - about as close as you can get to the initials of Hitler's party the NSDAP. Could we invite CI Lumsden to follow his hero all the way by hiding in the coal bunker for a few weeks before blowing his brains out?

British Transport Police

We were sorry to read of the prosecution of Inspector Stephen Craske, head of the Criminal Justice Unit of the BTP. Upon being handed over 700 files on London Underground fare dodgers, Inspector Jaske was allegedly heard to announce "*What's this crap and how do we get rid of it?*" Mr Craske admitted ripping up 727 files passed to him by London Underground revenue protection officers, but denied a charge of perverting the course of justice. Well done Mr Jaske!

Seattle

Following their humiliation at 1999's anti-capitalist protest, we are pleased to report that Seattle police have now got

their act together. What better way to report the scenes after officers in two patrol cars opened fire on each other whilst searching for a stolen patrol car. Only after 20 rounds had been fired did they stop. Now that's what we call friendly fire!

Sussex

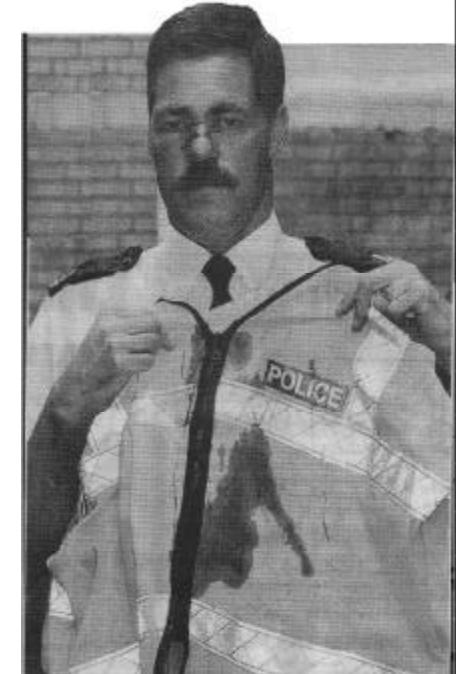
Proof that it is tough at the top comes from Sussex where the race to replace disgraced Chief Constable Paul Whitehouse has got off to a somewhat sluggish start. Despite offering £105,000 per annum only one officer returned a completed application form to replace the trigger happy Mr Whitehouse. As 16

Two Hospitalised Coppers For The Price Of One!

Now that's what we call a glorious twelfth! This issue's first hospitalised copper comes from across the water in North Belfast. Rioting flared against the RUC in Republican areas after the usual loyalist marches on July 12th, and this little piggy walked head first into a rock. Talk about sleeping on the job!



Our second bloodied bobby is PC John Tait who got a broken nose, black eye and smashed teeth in Glasgow, after police evicted protesters from the Govanhill baths. Police took control of the baths after a 141 day protest by local campaigners trying to keep it open. PC Tait described the violence as the worst he had seen in 23 years as a policeman. Lets hope he does not have to wait another 23 years to see its like again!



QUOTES

"All the police, armies, secret services, prisons and executions in the world cannot buck a market where the tax free profit on a kilo of cocaine is 20,000%"

Author Phillip Knightley at a debate on drugs at the Sunday Times Hay festival in May. In each of the three years the drugs czar Keith Helliwell has been in office the street prices of all drugs has fallen!

"They (the BNP) are a democratic party and in that regard they have my sympathy. The two parties are almost the same in terms of long-term plans. In terms of manifestos of the Tories and the BNP, you can hardly tell the difference"

Edgar Griffin, sacked Conservative activist and father of BNP leader Nick Griffin, in The Times (24th August 2001)

May Day - Berlin

Woke up with Atomic Kitten they were on MTV when I turned it on. Got a tram to the centre to try to stop the NPD (the main fascist group in Germany) march. No chance! There were roughly 700 of the brain dead wankers. A few hardy souls managed to get in front of the procession to try and stop it but were soon man handled by the other fascists in green. Bummer.

The real fun however came the night before. The idea was to meet up with a few class conscious souls and try to cause as much havoc as possible, particular targets being the multinationals and other capitalist bastions of power. The added incentive was the legal march through Berlin by the far-right NPD. Their march was originally banned but the Berlin authorities decided in their infinite wisdom to overturn this ban, whilst enforcing one on all left-wing demonstrations. Perhaps a lesson here for so called anti-fascists in Britain who constantly call for state bans against the NF or BNP - if the state can do it to them you can bet they will do it to us!

The night before we gathered in a bar in the Orangieburger Tor district fuelled by cheap beer and our teams excellent away win at table topping Monchengladbach, the bar manger even let us play our own CDs on his system.

The police presence was huge - over 9000 in a city the size of Berlin is a remarkable overkill. As a couple of green clad cops went past our watering hole the shout went up "Wir mochten keine, bulli schweine" - We don't want no cop pigs. This is a shit translation, but it works in German. Our friend the previously affable bar manager turned into a German version of Edward from the League of Gentlemen "Hello, Hello, what's all this shouting about we will have no trouble here" Too late.

Outside in the street there was the predictable "You First" stand off until a plank was thrown at the police. Running battles ensued until the water cannon arrived. One of the women in our party got scared. Nothing to do with the fear of getting hit with 100psi of water jet, she had just shelled out on a new pair of leather trousers and did not want to get them wet. Nice to see some people have their priorities correct!"

Storming Of Hackney Town Hall - 19 May

After doing the Class War stall at the London Fields Festival, and listening to all the rumours about what was going to happen that night, we decided to relax by visiting a local barbecue for well deserved liquid refreshment. This had to be the unluckiest gathering of individuals ever as over the coming months more than half the people were arrested or went on to be battered by the Italian police in Genoa - anyway you know who you are, keep kicking!

Come 8pm people started joking about the impending doom of Hackney Town Hall and the closure of local watering hole the Samuel Pepys, which was opening its doors for the last time. Resentment was high at another stage in the gentrification of Hackney. However when someone burst into the barbecue and shouted "they're marching down Mare Street" we all thought they were taking the piss.

Having gone up just to check we found just 4 old billy trying to control hundreds of people - funny after all the over-policing we have been used to. Needless to say

the crowd marched with purpose straight into the pub! It was to be 2am when the town hall got trashed - shame the local Labour/Tory councillors don't know the meaning of working a night shift or we would have had a lynching on our hands. Eventually the filth arrived for a bit of Punch and Judy and ended up using their CS gas, soft bastards. One to remember, shame we forgot the skull and crossbones to put up on the flagpole.

Drop The Charges! Release The Prisoners Demo, London - 2 June

Called to support those arrested in London at May Day 2001 and those arrested in Quebec at the Summit of the Americas, this demo - unknown to the organisers - coincided with the Trooping of the Colour!

Due to past harassment and intimidation, it is now virtually unheard of for people to apply to the police for the right to hold a march. What price our rights if we have to ask to exercise them? We gave up asking teacher if we could go to the toilet long ago.

The downside of this tactic is of course that it always has to be backed up by numbers - as no more than 50 activists turned up they were swiftly outnumbered by the cops, who refused to allow us to march. People instead walked on the

colleagues succeeded in re-directing us to the Canadian High Commission via Hyde Park. Demonstrating on a Saturday was possibly a mistake as when we got there the High Commission looked suspiciously closed.

Murder In Genoa - Visit To The Italian Consulate - Friday 20 July

This may not have been the most damaging visit to Italian government property following the murder of Carlo Giuliani, but it was probably the first! Realising that the embassy was in one of the most policed areas of central London, outraged members of the public instead decided to visit the Italian consulate within 3 hours of the shootings in Genoa being known.

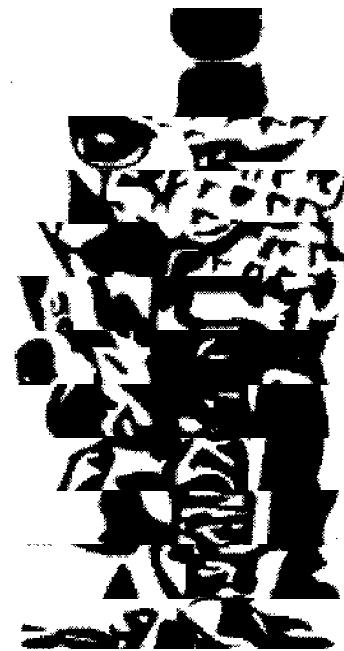
Locks were glued, stickers plastered over the door and the word Murderers written on the sign outside. An Italian national who had called hoping to find the consulate still open, freely apologised for her governments behaviour.

Action Against Group 4 - Bristol - Saturday 21 July

In solidarity with the day of action against the Campsfield Detention Centre (Campsfield, Oxfordshire), action was

Murder In Genoa - Picket Of the Italian Embassy - Sunday 22 July

With some 2000 leaflets distributed at short notice and an enthusiastic ring around, 200 activists made it to the West End on a Sunday evening. Flowers were laid outside, and a somewhat nervous police presence seemed a little wary of engaging too closely with the crowd. At a designated time the crowd moved from



All the arms we need

the rear of the embassy to the front, leaving the police trailing in their wake. At the front of the embassy a clearly nervous police presence guarded the front door, whilst senior officers could be heard radioing for reinforcements.

Now was the time to move on the front door, but people instead blocked the road, stopping the traffic but wasting vital time. Twenty minutes later as the police ranks swelled, activists decided to move as a group to avoid being trapped in a Section 60. This prompted things to briefly kick off as objects flew towards windows and a couple of posh cars were damaged. One protestor made a run for it only to be grabbed by a middle aged cop who's fighting days were well behind him. Freed by the crowd the man moved back towards his friends whilst cops drew their truncheons. People "mobbed up" around the man the police thought they were looking for, and it became clear an immediate arrest was not possible.

Stand off time. The police announced Section 60, the crowd announced "Bollocks". At a quick mass meeting it was argued people should leave only in a group for their own safety. As more and more TSG cops arrived the crowd was becoming out numbered by 3 or 4 to 1. Anybody who believes the police are under staffed should notice how they can pull out hundreds of officers from reserves on a summer Sunday evening as soon as a public order situation arises. We doubt anybody who was mugged or had their car stolen in London that day received the same service.

One or two demonstrators decided to slip away through police lines, being thoroughly searched and photographed before they were allowed to go. A stand off continued with the police insisting we were free to go, but preventing us from going as a group with lines of riot cops and vehicles. The majority did not buckle. Realising we were willing to hold out all night, the police began to pull people out individually. Legally under Section 60 you do not have to give your name and address or consent to a photograph - it

DOING THE BUSINESS

Class War's view from the direct action front line

pavement, refusing police requests to split into two groups. Unity is strength and the smaller the group the more unity is required. As we got to within a couple of minutes walk from Buckingham Palace panic broke out amongst the trailing police as it suddenly dawned on them that we were walking straight towards a major event in the royal calendar.

After much arm waving and hullabaloo a rather sweaty senior copper and his

taken in Bristol outside Satellite House (Blackswarthe Rd, St George) where Group 4 Security are based for the South West. The action consisted of damage to 2 vehicles. Tyres were punctured and bodywork sprayed and a windscreens smashed. Also a motorbike was sprayed. A message on paper was left behind the windscreens wiper explaining the action.



Class War in London

is simply a search for weapons. Each individual was searched by 2-3 cops and photographed, although many activists refused to give their names. Lets make them work for every scrap of information.

Bereft of anything else to do, one group of cops even followed activists the whole way to Oxford Circus, where they had the pleasure of sitting outside a pub whilst the activists inside held a de-briefing session over several cool beers. Standing up to Section 60 is clearly an idea that needs to be developed and discussed, but on the day defying it ensured our demonstration kept its dignity. A fitting tribute to those killed, arrested or injured in Genoa.

Fiesta For Life Against Death, London - 11 September

Thanks to the Docklands Light Railways free service we got to Docklands to discover the pigs had already encircled the crowd. We had apparently missed a bit of a ding dong with The Wombles, so we adjourned to the pub to see how events would unfold. It became obvious that 90% of the demonstrators were of an extremely low calibre, more interested in dressing up than changing anything. I tried to intervene when the cops were nicking a guy for fuck all but unfortunately I was beaten to it by a bloke dressed in a pink fluffy bikini. As he protested to the pigs one cop said "You can't say fuck all and expect to be taken seriously dressed like that" I found myself for the first time in my life in agreement with a copper. Anyway the day got somewhat overshadowed by four planes in America - its a funny old game Saint!

Genoa - Attacks Continue

Following the murder of Carlo Giuliani at the G8 summit in Italy in July, the Italian state has continued to take the fight to the anti-capitalists. Clearly Premier Silvio Berlusconi, owner of AC Milan, has learnt an important lesson from sport - that the best form of defence is attack.

In September over 100 homes were raided in cities as far apart as Milan, Turin, Cuneo, Trieste, Venice and even on Sardinia. The arrests were linked to an investigation into actions carried out in support of the campaign against maximum security prison regimes (FIES) in Spain. Just days before this the Pinelli Social Centre in Genoa was set ablaze in an arson attack. Computers were lost and the buildings electrical system destroyed. Firebombers then attacked the memorial to Carlo Giuliani at Piazza Alimonda. Whether these attacks were carried out by fascists or the state directly is not known.

Finally three germans from Leipzig are amongst those still imprisoned in Genoa. They would welcome letters, books and tapes (preferably hardcore)

Write to Peter Kunze, Michael Kohl or Michael Kodritsch at *Casa Circondariale, Marassi, Piazza Marassi 2, 16139 Genova, Italy.*



Rioting in Genoa

FREE UNJUSTLY CONFINED KNIGHT JEFFREY ARCHER

We recently received the following communiqué. Class War Prisoners are happy to support the campaign of this great man, so unfairly incarcerated by the British state.

Dear Supporters,

Here at the Free Unjustly Confined Knight Jeffrey Archer Movement, or F.U.C.K.J.A.M. as we have begun calling ourselves we have been overwhelmed with support in our campaign to free this literary giant. Only in England or 'Little Blairite Socialist Europe land', as no doubt it will soon be re-named could such a colossus of the arts be imprisoned for such a minor thing as being not wholly truth full in court. Has the world gone mad? Do the good yeomen of England not realise that his accuser was a common prostitute, who was probably Irish or something anyway. Lord Archer was simply carrying out his duty as a leading member of the Conservative party to lie and cheat in the name of self interest. What could be more English than this? And who could not take into account the pleasure that his most gracious Lord Archer has given to millions of semi-literate slack jawed holiday makers as they quickly grab one of his foil covered epics at WH Smiths before flying off to Spain or wherever to sit on a beach and devour his literary genius.

This is not some East End born son of a convicted criminal, this is a member of the House of Lords, a member of the British Establishment. He must be freed, both for his towering genius and his contribution to the world. His tireless work in raising money for charity, whether it be the United Nations or the Kurdish people must be recognised. We here at F.U.C.K.J.A.M. need your support, please send us any donations that you can spare (made out for CASH) and don't forget you can also personally show your support for our campaign.

Whenever you meet a member of the Conservative Party which has so cruelly abandoned this modern day Milton, when ever you see Lady Archer or either of his sons don't forget to shout "F.U.C.K. Jeffrey Archer", they will get the message and I assure you it will be appreciated. Finally let us not abandon Lord Archer rotting in Prison surrounded by the common rabble and filth of our society, please don't forget to send him items to make his confinement more comfortable, tobacco or "snout", and Vaseline or other lubricants will no doubt be most appreciated as will any of your own short stories, from which Lord Archer will no doubt gain inspiration for his own work

Yours most Sincerely. Mr Ben Annis, Chairperson, Free Unjustly Confined Knight Jeffrey Archer.



**REMEMBER F.U.C.K.
JEFFREY ARCHER.**

The Real IRA - Bag Full Of Bombs, Heart Full Of Hate, Head Full Of Shite

Whilst we support the struggle to defeat British imperialism in Ireland, the means being adopted by The RIRA are thoroughly anti working class and reactionary. A small group of armed individuals operating outside the struggle of the working class and totally unresponsive to it, cannot assist anyone to achieve social and political justice. An armed tendency operating in conjunction with the class and taking its reaction from them is a different animal completely than the distortion of reaction operating under the name Real IRA. In short they are part of the chaos created by British imperialism and not a solution to it.

Working class people in England, Scotland and Wales are not the enemy of the cause of a free Ireland. We are not responsible for the British states continued domination of the people of that island, any more than we are for the state's continued exploitation and oppression of the people of *this* island. There can be no doubt whatever that the target in the majority of RIRA bomb attacks have been ordinary working class folk. After the first carnage at Omagh we would have thought that the ace tacticians behind the group would have worked out that if you plant a massive bomb in a crowded shopping centre innocent people of all political persuasions will die. Trusting the police to actually pass on a clear warning is trusting the state to save whatever political reputation you think you have. But actually giving them further excuse by making deliberately ambiguous locations, is admitting that the real intention is to massacre scores of innocent people. These are not bombs planted against big business of capitalism or the police or the army, which have gone off and accidentally or innocently caught innocent people in the blast. Such bombs would be well intentioned and strategically sound if irresponsible of mis-judged. That is not the case here, it is the ordinary person of all ages in the street who are the intended targets.

We are not pacifists, and some in Class War disagree with the peace agreement,

but that is not the point. Waging war against the public and having them as the actual target, puts this group outside the scope of any support whatever no matter how critical that support might have been.

The people in Republican areas have massively endorsed the peace process (at least for now) and it is from the people that any armed group claiming to act in their name must take its mandate. The RIRA clearly do not have any mandate from the mass of the people or even a strong minority of the minority. That being the case in whose name are they operating? Had the group been relentlessly waging armed struggle against the forces of the state and its war machine, despite the lack of a mandate from the people such a campaign would have been misguided though still progressive and arguably worthy of critical defence. But a bombing campaign aimed deliberately at the whole of the people of both islands is surely the work of right wing psychopaths?

Perhaps it is time for the Provisional IRA to come off cease fire long enough to tidy up their back yard and apply a little hands on psychiatric treatment to the escapees of some mental institution who appear to be dangerous and at large?

Nearly Is Not Good Enough!

Champagne sales briefly flourished in September as rumours spread the country that the Queen Mum had died. Sadly this was a false alarm, although the dummy run won't have done any harm to the off licence trade!

The source for this excitement was apparently the Yorkshire Evening Post who "accidentally" put her obituary on their website. We look forward to reading the real thing, and have put the champagne on ice!



Hurry up and die!

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Official website under construction, details to follow. In the meantime check www.tao.ca/~lemming/classwar for all the latest Class War news, views and bile.

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We also strongly recommend checking the following website - www.minersadvice.co.uk

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PO BOX 467 LONDON E8 3QX



JUSTICE FOR MARK BARNESLEY

In August Mark was placed in segregation at HMP Wakefield again - under rule 45 of the 1999 Prison Rules - as a threat to good order and discipline. We're not clear whether this is for refusing to work or because of Mark's Turkish solidarity initiative. The reason we're not clear is simple enough - prisoners are supposed to be given written reasons for their segregation within 24 hours - Mark has been given none. Mark has now been moved to HMP Leeds where he remains in segregation. Prison Service Order 1701 states that Segregation is not to be used as a punishment - that if a prisoner is transferred from one jail to another the reasons for segregation in the new jail must arise in the new jail. The rules -as always -don't apply to Mark .

Write to him at:

HMP Whitemoor
March
Cambs
PE15 0PR

Remember to quote his prison number - WA2897 -and enclose an SAE if you want a reply. Mark may well be moved again shortly- so check the website to keep up to date.

Solidarity actions with Mark have continued. A picket of the Home Office was held on 22nd August to protest his continued segregation, and London supporters organised the first meeting of Revolutionary Solidarity - intended as a political prisoner support group that hopefully does more than write letters. We were pleased to be able to provide a platform for supporters of the GRAPO prisoners and the Turkish hunger strikers. To get involved write to the JFMB PO Box.



Mark Barnsley

The Fight Against Prison Slave Labour

Supporters of the Mark Barnsley campaign occupied Hepworth Building Products in Edlington, South Yorkshire. Hepworths make a fortune by getting

prisoners at Wakefield prison to package and assemble some of their products, for a wage of £8 per week - (32p an hour.)

Mark commented "*I really hope actions against companies like this carry on; they are so easy to target on the outside and it is so inspiring to those on the inside. Prisons themselves can stand up to pressure but the companies that profit from them can't. This is what I call real solidarity.*"

Prison labour is big business in the United States. UNCOR operates 90 prison factories and is expanding. Prisoners at San Quentin enter computer data for the Bank of America. If you book a flight through TWA in California -you will be put through to a prisoner answering the phone. Washington prisoners package products for Microsoft.

Prisoners are, as the US prison activist Paul Wright has described slaves of the state. No health benefits, no National Insurance, no sick pay, no holidays, not even the minimum wage. In the Home Office's recently published Way Ahead document, plans to expand the use of prison labour in the UK are set out. A scheme called Jail to Work is to be established in selected jails where -as "training" -prisoners are forced to work for selected companies for less than the minimum wage inside - with the chance of a job with them at minimum wage when they are released.

If you wanted proof that jail exists as a means of terrorising the poor into accepting the "discipline" of low paid work -you could not have clearer proof. Prisoners are already forced to work doing such inspiring jobs as making prison uniforms, making and packaging clothes for Joe Bloggs, packaging screws for Wicks DIY. The next few years will see more and more companies seize on the opportunities for profit offered by prison labour.

It is a disciplinary offence under the Prison Rules to *"intentionally fail to work properly, or, being required to work, to refuse to do so."* If we're serious about solidarity with working class people inside then actions like that taken against Hepworths ought to become regular events - to let those who want to get fat off the sweat of prison labour know they will pay a heavy price for doing so. If prisons are to become laboratories of labour then companies which exploit prison labour ought to be treated the way Huntingdon Life Sciences have been ! Other companies involved in prison labour:

Blakey Electrics
Longton Road
Lewisham
London
SE13 7LJ
Tel 0208 852 4383

- Have work done in at least 3 prison workshops

Imperial London Hotels Ltd

Russell Square

London

WC1B 5BB

Tel 0207 837 3655

- Use prison labour to pack complimentary tea and beverage packs for guests rooms.

There is of course more than one way to make a profit out of prisoners. ARAMARK Ltd - which describes itself as a "significant and successful player in the UK Hospitality Industry" and "a company where the best people want to work" - has taken over a large number of prison canteens. Part of the deal with the Prison Service is that canteens will no longer be subsidised - so that prisoners have to pay the recommended retail price for toiletries, stationery etc.. If you are on the basic regime under the Incentives and Earned Privileges scheme you get £2.50 a week private cash to spend. Under ARAMARK that means you're screwed. The privatisation of canteens is a double bind for prisoners - in order to be able to afford canteen prices you have to keep your head down to crawl up the IEP scheme to get standard or enhanced rates of private cash - so ARAMARK get fat and rich, and the Prison Service gets an extra boost to discipline.

Some prisoners have organised petitions against ARAMARK's pricing, and delay in supply of mail order goods. At other jails prisoners have tried to organise boycotts. A bit of solidarity from outside wouldn't go amiss. ARAMARK-which has an annual revenue of \$7.3 billion, and has made \$1.6 billion for its shareholders over the last 6 years - has its UK headquarters at :

Millbank Tower,
21-24 Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP
Tel 020 7963 0000
Fax: 020 7963 0500

Contact Justice For Mark Barnsley at
PO Box 381 Huddersfield HD1 3XX, Tel
07944 522001 email: barnsleycampaign
@ hotmail.com
www.freemarkbarnsley.com

UK Prisoners Call for Solidarity Action with Turkish Hunger Strikers

Prisoner-activists Mark Barnsley (HMP Leeds) and John Bowden (HMP Bristol) have issued the following statement:-

Solidarity with the Turkish Prisoners

Fellow Prisoners: On 30 June 22 year old Zehra Kulaksic died following 221 days without solid food. She was the fifth person to die on the hunger strike being staged by TAYAD (the Association of Families and Friends of Political Prisoners) in solidarity with Turkish political prisoners. Her death brings to 53 the total of those who have either died on the death fast or were murdered by the state in its vicious onslaught against protesting prisoners on 19 December 2000. The prisoners are continuing their protest against the regime's attempts to destroy them by confining them to isolation cells in the new F-type prisons.



To All UK Prisoners - A Call for International Solidarity

Many of you will be following the courageous life and death struggle currently taking place in the Turkish prisons. In the FIES units of Spain (equivalent to our CSC units) prisoners have recently launched an initiative in support of the Turkish prison struggle and in support of their own 3 demands. This initiative, which is supported by prisoners in France, Greece and by Basque and Kurdish prisoners, is in the form of a hunger protest on the first Saturday of each month. The three demands of the FIES prisoners are as follows:

1. An end to the FIES units
2. An end to "dispersion", whereby prisoners are moved away from their families
3. The release of all terminally ill prisoners, and those who have spent more than 20 years in prison because of their political beliefs and militant attitude.

In solidarity with our comrades in the Turkish prisons and those fighting for justice throughout the world, we propose the launch of an initiative along the same lines as the Spanish prisoners; a food strike on the first Saturday of every month.

Since the Whitemoor and Parkhurst escapes of 1994 and 1995 there has been a concerted attempt to crush the British prison struggle once and for all; a war of attrition the state has all but won. By making this simple act of solidarity we are taking the first step towards renewing the struggle and asserting our humanity and our defiance.

Like the FIES prisoners, we are proposing three reasonable and achievable demands of our own:

1. A minimum of one hour's daily exercise in the open air. It is appalling that at a time when prisoners are once again being locked two and three to a cell, the statutory allowance of daily exercise has been reduced to only half an hour.
2. The right of all prisoners to wear their own clothes. Twenty years after Bobby Sands and his comrades died on hunger strike, the right of prisoners to wear their own clothes is still not enshrined in the prison rules. Because of this, governors regard the wearing of civilian clothes as a "privilege" which can be withdrawn at any time. This is increasingly happening with prisoners placed on "basic."
3. The abolition of compulsory prison work. We are currently seeing the growing exploitation of prisoner's labour by private companies and by the state. If prisoners choose to work in return for remuneration they should have that choice- but compulsory work is nothing less than slavery.

These are the three demands that we propose. We ask that all militant prisoners, all those who have not been crushed by state repression, all those not bought off by the arse-lickers

charter of the Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme, all those who have an instinct for solidarity and the courage to stand up against oppression, support this proposal. Our numbers may be few but they have the potential to grow. Spread the word. Support the protest. The fightback starts here.

Mark Barnsley and John Bowden.

For more information, contact Nick (Justice for Mark Barnsley Campaign) on 07944 522001.

From One Shithouse To Another

We received the following article from a former inmate of HMP Wandsworth and HMP Ford. We welcome further comment from serving prisoners for future issues.

Sitting here in my allotted 5ft by 7ft space in the sixteen man dormitory that will be my home for the foreseeable future, I cannot help but laugh at the thinking that goes into some of the decisions the powers that be make, not to mention the pettiness and total absurdity of some of the rules and regulations.

With only two weeks until I was due to be tagged and sent home with a new 'fashion accessory' on my ankle, the wisdom of the system deemed it right and proper that I be removed from my single cell (with colour TV and panoramic views of the next block!) and uproot me from within spitting distance of my friends and family to send me on a jaunt to the south coast.

Having been a model prisoner (though avoiding any arse licking I might add) I now find myself in the 'open' Ford prison having previously been in the dark depths of Wandsworth (scene of the last hanging in Britain Argh!)

Readers might be thinking "shut the fuck up you ungrateful bastard" and in some respects you would be right. There are a few things about prison life that upset or mellow the experience for the passenger. I personally find the whole moving scenario a major pain in the arse. It can be a very unsettling, disorientating and worrying experience. I'm sure even the big mouthed wide boys get a tad stressed at the prospect of being taken from a settled routine on a wing you are accustomed to and then having to undergo the whole process again, with a new set of rules and faces.

For me personally the move from a 23 hour lock down in one of England's more unpleasant establishments to the relative freedom of Ford has been a bit of a culture shock. Apart from the obvious distance problems and the fact that I will have to reapply for tagging (which may end up meaning I'll have to do all my sentence due to the backlog) I'm now in a position of not knowing what the fuck is going on - again. Although I do know that I will have to work here, making some fucker a profit from my labour for which I get £7 a week - yippee!

The screws here are keen to point out the error of your ways if you step out of line. The problem with this (as in Wandsworth and no doubt other penal places) is that you do not know where the line is! I can honestly say that these trained amoeba have absolutely no interest in conveying what it is they want you to do. The cons here are a bit more helpful though. In Wandsworth if you ask a screw a question, the cons think you

are brown nosing. If you ask a con you would be lucky to get a sneer, a grunt at best. A no-win situation! Basically you were left to work it out yourself, which in that environment can be a rather daunting task.

Here at Ford, if it was not for my comrades in incarceration, I would know Jack Shit about the runnings of the Category D second world war airstrip turned nick (1960) The regime here resembles a bizarre Butlin's meets the Boy Scouts meets The Teletubbies. We all live in these bunker type dorms surrounded by fences a young lad could scale in seconds! The dorms are left unlocked all night and they trust that inmates will adhere to the nightly checks and stay snuggly in their pits. With such amazing rules as 'stand by your bed' for inspection (very borstal and *Scum*) You are not allowed to lay on your bed if you are not working! What? If you have not got green trousers on from Monday to Friday you will be reported, charged and confined to your dorm (the only way to check this would be to make sure a screw sat outside from dawn 'til dusk - totally unenforceable!)

My favourite so far is that you can have your T shirt off, but only if you are not sunbathing - the authorities fear prisoners may sue if they catch skin cancer! Its no wonder 15 tormented souls had it away on their toes in the week I arrived here!

You wonder who sits around making this shit up. In Wandsworth you have a central hall with all the wings leading off like wheel spokes. I came back from exercise one day (this entails an hour in a yard with several hundred other bogs walking around in a circle) I go to walk to my wing and I'm stopped, shouted at and told I'm walking the wrong way around the circle. Is it me? Or would these masters of mind control not be better putting their collective genius together to do a crossword or something?

Sean Cregan was jailed for offences committed on May Day 2000. He was released as Class War went to press.

No Wonder The Trains Don't Run On Time

In April 2000 Class War attended a demonstration in Lincoln against the Queen's distribution of the Maundy Money to local pensioners. As actions go, it was not the greatest. The editor of the local paper told us he would not give any publicity to our demonstration as he did not wish to encourage it. Plain clothes police threatened demonstrators with arrest if they went near the Queen. Those leaving Lincoln by car had their vehicles stopped and searched by local officers headed by a man (presumably from Special Branch) who refused to identify himself. The whole thing must have cost a fortune.

Not as much however, as the money spent by the Queen that day. This summer in an exposé on royal spending, *The Independent* revealed that the Queen travelled on the royal train from Slough to Lincoln that day. At a cost of £34,263. Would it not have been easier to cancel the event, forget the patronising toy money and give £34,263 to the local pensioners? Or put the money into funding a public transport system that actually worked?

The Maundy Money ceremony occurs at a cathedral near you on the day before Good Friday. Get down there next year and make your voice heard.



THIS IS CLASS WAR

The Class War Federation is an organisation of groups and individuals who have come together to change the Society we live in, to improve the lot of working class people.

This Society is divided into classes based on control of its institutions and wealth. The Ruling Class - those who "own" the factories or natural resources - whether it's through shares or being chairman of the board etc., who are under normal circumstances supported by the Middle Class - those who gain their position in society by patronage of the Ruling Class - who carry out their dirty work of controlling and (dis) organising the working class who do all the necessary work. Such a society is the root cause of most of the problems experienced by Working Class people the World over. as the Ruling Class has every intention of keeping its privileged position it must be destroyed - this is Class War.

Real change can only come about by working class people organising themselves to deal with the problems that they experience and to provide for ourselves.

It is not about becoming better treated slaves but masters of our destiny. Direct action is necessary against the individuals and institutions who stand in the way of this. There is no alternative. Violence is a necessary part of the Class War - not

as elitist terrorists but as an integrated part of the Class - they started it, we'll have to finish it!

Class society creates other abuses based upon the prejudices of Ruling or Middle Class such as gender, ethnic origin, sexuality, disability. The Ruling Class often use these to divide our class. We must unite on the basis of we have in common our Working Class backgrounds and needs.

The Class must fight these divisions, on all fronts. Above all the CWF believes that politics cannot be separated from life - and life from politics. We reject the missionary/ righteous so called "revolutionary" Left. Our politics must be fulfilling and relevant to our everyday lives.

Working Class people must take responsibility for their progressive revolutionary politics - fly by night middle class radicals have been the bane of our movement for as long as the Working Class has existed.

OUR AIM

Therefore the aim of the CWF is to increase the militancy and self awareness of the Working Class in defending their interests and solving their problems. We do this through propaganda, active participation and debate as equals.

Prison Abolition Conference

Saturday 26 January 2002 10.30 - 5pm

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1R (nearest tube Holborn, Central and Piccadilly lines)

Free admission (donations welcome!) For more information or to help out on the day send SAE to:

P.A.C. c/o Black Flag, BM Hurricane, London WC1N 3XX

Establishment Anti-Racism - Making Things Better? Or Making Things Worse By The Bucketful? Oldham and Afterwards

No reader of Class War can have been unaware that this summer saw some of the most sustained and dramatic inner-city violence that Britain has seen since the mid-1980s. You would also be aware that after most disturbances of this nature, Class War can usually be found with posters, articles and photographs articulating and supporting the violence that has occurred. Not for us the whiny leftie "it's all the fault of the police" or the "police let it happen as part of some huge conspiracy" that you find in your average leftie rag. When working class people fight back together, we applaud and applaud it loudly.

However as most people know this summer's violence was a little more complicated than the 1980s "everybody against the police" uprisings of Toxteth, Handsworth, Tottenham etc. The uprisings of the 1980s were wrongly labelled as race riots by the media when they were nothing of the sort. A race riot is black against white or white against Asian etc. As communities fought together against the police whatever those uprisings were they were not motivated by racial hatred. This summer's disturbances were also different to the violence in Oxford, Tyneside and Salford (amongst other areas) in the early 1990s. There a very clear anti-police, anti-authority element was discerned. Where Asian owned shops were looted it was not because they were Asian it was because they were often the *only* shops in the area.

This time in Stoke, Oldham, and Burnley there was a clear racial element to the violence. We are not going to cheer lead or applaud that. The Oldham troubles had a clear influence on the BNP's remarkable vote in two of the town's constituencies, the vote achieved by their leader, Nick Griffin, in Oldham West and Royton being the highest ever achieved by a fascist standing in a general election. To listen to some politicians and journalists, you would believe that these problems had just dropped out of the sky. We believe they are deep, long running and require a seismic change in policy on race in the UK.

When Darcus Howe's excellent 1999 Channel 4 series, White Tribe, exposed the racism and poverty that was endemic in the town, Oldham Council cried foul. Rather than accept that there were serious problems on their own doorstep they lambasted Channel 4 and Howe, most naively of all in a pompous letter to new Labour rag The New Statesman, where Channel 4 were accused of exaggerating and fault finding. A year later Howe's programme looked visionary and Oldham Council looked like what they are - New Labour ostriches administering the town's poverty and racial division with their heads firmly in the sand.

The last five years have been good one's for the far-right in Britain. The election of a right wing Labour government and the failure of any substantial progressive challenge to Blairism to emerge have given the far-right the chance to claim radical credentials. They have been further helped by the world wide crisis over asylum seekers and the resulting media debate in which the government seems constantly able to identify asylum seekers as a problem, but then unwilling or unable to do anything about it. So unwilling in fact you get the strong

impression they are quite happy to have the farcical scenes at Eurotunnel's property in Calais on the front pages rather than the farcical scenes in the NHS or our schools in the headlines.

Another factor in the rise of the far-right has been their own ability to grasp the nettle that in the United Kingdom overt Nazism will never go down a bundle. The replacement of John Tyndall as BNP leader and the BNP's move towards a quieter, more thoughtful racism has not only improved their membership, but has given them some access to the media and other political activists on the right. Their use of the Internet means millions of people can now discover their message.

Perhaps most significantly by turning their back on open marches and rallies they have also avoided the traditional cycle of fights with anti-fascists, court



Nick Griffin - In the kingdom of the blind, the one-eyed man is king...

appearances and negative publicity. The tiny National Front provides a considerable service to the BNP by attempting to march and rally around the country so regularly. They keep race in the headlines, ensure that more overtly racist nutters tend to join the NF rather than the BNP, and distract anti-fascists from the greater long term threat.

All this does not explain how the BNP can confidently talk of winning council seats in Lancashire and possibly elsewhere in the north in the 2002 local elections. Two other factors have been significant on a national level - the failure of "anti-racism" as it is embodied by council's, the government and "the left" across the country and the clear racial tension between Asian youths and other youths in certain towns and cities. Both of these areas are ones that the government and local council's seem to wish to ignore, and both are issues that "the left" downplay, either because they want to pretend there is no problem and secondly because they are at fault for creating the current mess.

You only have to flick through a phone book or look at a list of services provided by your local council to see just how

racialised a society Britain has become in the past thirty years. From the Black Police Association to the local Irish Women's Centre, Britain seems to have moved from a society that analysts always saw as divided by class into one you could be forgiven for thinking is rigidly divided instead by race.

In local government in particular unpleasant signs are emerging of racialised communities demanding resources not on the basis of need but on race. In Luton, the council has faced complaints from the mostly Asian Bury Park area that it is not receiving as much funding as the Marsh Farm area, where tenants tend to be white or black. Nearly a decade ago Brent had the mad Black nationalist Councillor Amula-Johnson, bitterly complaining that Brent's Asian community "got more" than Brent's black community. If you imagine your council as a fat cream cake, politicians are increasingly seeing the need to ensure that different communities receive a slice.

Apart from the unpleasant spectacle of communities scrambling against each other for resources that should be available to all, the racialising of debate and the dearth of clear class politics leads a void the size of the Grand Canyon for the far-right. If the black community has "community leaders" why not the white community? If communities are defined not by their location or their class but by race why not the white community? The surprise is not that the BNP have succeeded against this background in Oldham, but that they have not succeeded in other cities.

The left could at least explain all this nonsense away in the past by talking of the need to protect minorities from a racist majority. This of course is undermined nowadays by the cosmetic anti-racism of the establishment, who are quite happy to trumpet their anti-racism at the Labour Party conference or meetings of the Metropolitan Police's various community forums.

More accurately in big cities it is undermined by demographics - in London more than 1 in 3 people are from an ethnic minority. Many other cities are now largely multi-racial. By 2030 the majority of people in London will be non-white. Similar predictions are made for other British cities. Class War has no problem with this - our class has always been and always will be mongrel. But to talk of "minorities" and the need for positive discrimination is crass in the face of such facts.

We repeat - if you racialise working class towns and communities, as the left has done for a generation, into black communities, Asian communities and so on, you cannot affect astonishment when somebody comes along claiming to speak for the white community (whatever that is) and gains votes and influence on that basis.

The sad thing in Oldham is that a middle class shyster like Griffin has been allowed to gain such influence. A Cambridge graduate from rural Welshpool who dabbles in farming, Griffin would not be seen dead in a town like Oldham but for the racial animosity that he has helped to stir up, but that was also there before the BNP arrived. That the BNP - and to a lesser extent the NF - targeted Oldham can be

in no doubt - that there were problems there that encouraged them to target the town ahead of others should also be recognised. It was very easy for Oldham Police Chief Supt Eric Hewitt to blame the BNP and the NF for the violence in the town in May because it is straightforward and politically acceptable to do so. To take some of the blame himself, or to blame some individuals in Oldham's Asian community would be a step too far for a policeman unless he had the authority to do so at the highest level.

A factor that has to be analysed, and we will win few friends for doing so, is the racial tensions that exist in many towns



Oldham riot - 15 coppers injured, petrol bombs thrown at police

and cities. This is not simply an Asian versus White thing - Hindus in Luton were targeted for assault and vandalism in 1999 after a major cricket match, not by racist English supporters but by racist Pakistani supporters, outraged that their team had lost to their biggest rivals. The fact remains that clear tensions exist - most evidently in Oldham.

British cities have a long and sorry record of casual racism towards Asians and cases of more serious violence up to and including murder are also known. What has also become clear in recent years is not only is the Asian community unwilling to accept this racism (which is good), but that some youths in the Asian community are quite willing to assault people first and ask questions later (which is bad, and potentially disastrous).

The mugging and beating of white pensioner Walter Chamberlain in Oldham was a clear factor in May's disturbances. We will not join the "left" in complaining long and hard about manipulation of the incident by the media or trying to argue that it was not racist - people who assault pensioners are scum and deserve everything they get. Had a 75 year old Asian man been beaten up by white teenagers the Anti-Nazi League would not have offered up any excuses, they would instead have been marching through Oldham in droves.

Equally controversial was the argument - a great example of the mess we are in - over the figures offered by the police for racial assaults in Oldham. The BNP have made great play of the figure of 60% of assaults being committed by Asians on whites. The figure is vigorously denied by "the left".

Whatever the reality of the statistics, the fact that the left seem unable to accept any racist assaults are committed by Asian youths anywhere in Britain is a gift to Griffin and co that they accept with glee. That similar problems exist in Tower Hamlets and the Midlands is certainly known to us, we hope it does not have to take a death before some people remove

their blinkers.

In Oldham, Griffin also benefited from the oily nature of his opponent, new Labour Minister and former Bennite Michael Meacher. Mr Meacher, who once famously lost a libel action over whether or not he was middle class, has presided over the on going poverty and division of Oldham along racial lines with barely a peep. Once firmly on the Labour left, he realised which side his bread was buttered as the party moved to the right and followed fellow Bennite's Chris Mullin and Peter Hain to life as a Minister in Blair's Britain.

Not that Meacher has totally lost his rebellious nature. He did find time during the last parliament to greet and march with demonstrators against a major government bill - in March 1998 Meacher found time to join the Countryside Alliance's mass march through London against the proposed ban on fox hunting. We are unaware of any other example of a government minister marching against his own government. That Meacher chose foxhunting, rather than any of the attacks New Labour has made against the working class speaks volumes.

Earlier this year Meacher was exposed in the Sunday Times as a serial property investor, with 12 properties worth over £2 million in either his or his wife's name around the country. To his constituents in the terraced streets and housing estates he must appear a very distant figure. Who is wealthier or who is the bigger snob - Griffin or Meacher - is probably something known only to their respective accountants. That neither have anything to offer the working class of Oldham should be clear.

It is class, so rarely spoken about and so eagerly pushed out of "left" politics by race, that is the key to the future in Oldham and other towns. The BNP by offering cross class politics to the white community are no more the answer than "left" or Black nationalist politicians offering race based cross class politics to communities. In time, the cross class nature of the BNP will begin to unsettle



Falwell - Leader of the US Moral Majority

and then disappoint the working class supporters the far-right have in Oldham. The damage that may be done by then however is incalculable.

We have to develop serious, permanent politics and structures that push the interests of the working class and nobody else. That is a seriously long struggle, given the pathetic base we start from. It

has taken a long time to get into this mess. It will take a long time to get out of it, but we can start by recognising what has gone wrong.

The BNP, British Politics and Islam

One of the devices that the BNP have used in Oldham to avoid prosecution under the Race Relations Act is to concentrate on criticising "Muslims" in their leaflet drives and on their websites, rather than Asians or Blacks. As Muslims are a religious rather than a racial group, they are not protected directly by the Act. This has led to calls to extend the Race Relations Act further.

Class War however, sees another reason behind their tactic. Even before the World Trade Centre bombing, there were considerable fears and suspicions held by many working class people about the *political* rise of Islam, and in particular fundamentalist Islam. If people go to a mosque and pray each Friday, that is no business of anybody else's. However when people call for books to be banned and burn them in the street or campaign against the name of a well known bingo chain because its name is the same as Islam's holiest site, people feel uneasy.

In the 1980s the media skilfully analysed the rise of fundamentalist Christian groups in the USA, through articles, books and documentaries. The Shamen's classic single "*Jesus Loves Amerika*" was a great debunker of the era of Jimmy Swaggart and the other chancers of the Christian right. By 1985 the Moral Majority organisation of the Rev Jerry Falwell claimed 6.5 million members. Pat Robertson's evangelical TV programme was watched by 16 million of the 80 million US households with a TV.

The political importance of these groups on the Republican Party and US society in general was, and to an extent remains considerable. George W Bush's election, and his position on abortion was greatly influenced by such campaigners. It would be hard to deny that the last twenty years has seen a similar drift to the right within the Islamic world, and a hardening of attitudes on issues such as women's rights, blasphemy and co-existence with other religions. The writer Hanif Kureishi has pointed out that the second generation of British Muslims appears more religious than the first generation, not less.

These issues were rarely discussed or even acknowledged by the mainstream media. Worse, following the New York bombing they have been discussed hysterically. To have treated fundamentalist Christianity as something to be analysed and exposed but fundamentalist Islam as something to sweep under the carpet was wrong.

Politicians have been little better. By talking about fundamentalist Islam the BNP seem to have been virtually unique in British politics. About the only long term pronouncement from New Labour has been their policy of allowing separate Islamic schools in Britain. This appears to be nothing short of disastrous - can they point out to any successes in having separate religious schools in Northern Ireland? Nick Griffin wants to build walls in Oldham to keep apart the white and the Asian community. New Labour is willing to divide people from the age of five into Muslim and Christian. What's the difference?

Who Are The Anarchists?

May Day 2001 saw the media's reporting of Anarchists plunge new depths, courtesy largely of *The Observer*'s fiction that activists armed with samurai swords planned to mobilise on Oxford Street. But who are the people turning up for this now annual set piece confrontation? Class War takes a look at the people responsible for all those media headlines each summer.

1. Part Time Anarchists - At work a mild mannered be-spectacled servant of authoritarian power, at the weekend the combat trouser wearing Chumbawamba T shirt wearing warrior. Quite willing to shout and bawl at the latest demo, whilst taking due care not to break a single bye law. Has a laminated copy of health and safety regulations in his/her rucksack in case things get out of hand.

Favourite Drink - Bottled Beer, drunk out of the corner of the mouth
Ideal T Shirt - "I'm an Anarchist Me" on the front and "No, really!" on the back!

2. The Placard Waver - A regular at every big event. Their placard is their pride and joy, having nurtured it from its humble beginnings as a sheet of A4 on the office photocopier. As we all know revolutions and the downfall of great empires are often brought that little bit closer by a 4x2 and a slogan!
Favourite Drink - Baccardi Breezers
Ideal T Shirt - Anything with a mis-spelt slogan, especially something along the lines of "Noize Boyz"

3. The Band Wagoners - Always just a stepping stone between the last fad and the next fad. Main aim is to be seen at the demo and in particular at or better still on top of any sound system present. Favourite Drink - Pills (that means pharmaceuticals not Pils)

Ideal T Shirt - Something with Tibetan or Hindi writing on it, for women it must show the (pierced) belly button at all times.

4. The Old Timer - Used to do a bit, assures everyone they would come back to the movement full time if it was going anywhere. Always attends the Anarchist Bookfair. Cannot understand why more people are not involved in the movement, but cannot actually stand most of the Anarchists who are in it. Susceptible to heart failure if told Hawkwind are not touring this year.

Favourite Drink - Cheap Bitter
Ideal T Shirt - Glastonbury 73

5. Punk As Fuck - Always up for it when it kicks off, but liable to fall over when faced with any actual fighting. Hates all the national Anarchist organisations, and assures everyone they are all full of wankers, especially the groups they have been expelled from.

Favourite Drink - Anything
Ideal T Shirt - Crass - Violence Is Their Answer Not Ours. This should be as faded as possible, and should never ever have been ironed.

6. You and Me - Nice normal people getting off our arses and taking the bastards on. Isn't that great!

Driven To Distraction

Ken Livingstone is into his second year as London mayor, although his achievements can be recorded on the back of a very small postage stamp. Elected on a tide of personality and independence, Ken had a clear mandate to keep the public sector out of London Underground. On this issue he has been skilfully tied up in knots by the government. Leaving aside his arse-licking of the police during May Day 2001, about the only action from Livingstone has been to plaster himself on tens of thousands of posters across London, and to ban the pigeon feed seller from Trafalgar Square. His plan to turn London's skyline into a second Manhattan with dozens of new tower blocks has turned, literally to ashes.

All that seems left for Ken, apart from getting his Labour party membership back, is the introduction of the central London congestion charging scheme. This is currently under consultation, with a planned introduction date of 2003 at the earliest. The gist of the scheme is a £5 tax per day for motorists who drive in an area of central London from 0700 to 1900 Monday to Friday. Residents inside the zone get a 90% discount, after proving residency, vehicle ownership and paying an administration fee. Money raised will, after costs be ploughed back into public transport.

As with the poll tax this tax is not related in any way to the ability to pay. Nor does it consider the size of the vehicle or the damage a particular vehicle does to the environment - a small unleaded hatchback pays the same as a vintage Bentley. MPs are of course, exempt. £5 per day is a lot of money for many working class car owners. It will price the poorest off the road first. Whilst an irritation to wealthy car owners, it is little

more than that. If Ken really wanted to reduce car ownership in central London and truly fund public transport, why not charge £50 per day? That of course would hurt the wealthy, and the Daily Mail reading middle class driver - the sort of person who Ken needs on his side if he is to get re-elected in 2004.

Perhaps most interesting of all is the monitoring this scheme brings into our lives. Livingstone proposes more than 100 digital cameras that will read number plates and check them off against a database. A circle, formed by these cameras, will be created around inner London and that will form the boundary of the charging zone. The Metropolitan Police must be rubbing their hands with glee at the surveillance this gives them of those entering and leaving central London. During future demonstrations for example, entrance to inner London can be prevented by positioning officers at the points along the circle. A second ring of steel is being constructed in front of our eyes, in the name of public transport.



Not-so-Red Ken

SIGHTHILL

It is the refusal to recognise that racism is produced from the top down which has scuppered the anti-racist/anti-fascist designs of much of the left. Recent events in Sighthill, Glasgow, are a case in point. The murder of a Kurdish asylum seeker in Sighthill in August, was the latest in a series of racist attacks on refugees housed on the estate.

The Glasgow Asylum Rights Campaign recently reported that "Asylum seeker children and adults, including the elderly and disabled, have been attacked with baseball bats, sticks, stones, rocks, bricks and stabbed with knives and broken glass. Concrete blocks have been thrown on them from high windows. They have been threatened and chased on their way to school, church, and shops. Hair has been torn from their heads, they have been flung to the ground and kicked, and women have experienced sexual assaults, and repeatedly threatened with rape. Death threats have been made in person and written prominently on walls, close doors and landings. Graffiti also identifies which flats within a building house asylum seekers with profane language and incitement to violence." On the Sighthill estate on April 21, three Palestinian brothers, Iyad, Haitham, and Ziad Saada, were attacked by a mob of up to 40 people, wielding bottles and baseball bats.

The British National Party has leafleted in Sighthill, and much controversy was caused by their distribution of a leaflet linking problems such as homelessness and hospital waiting lists to the presence of asylum seekers. Over 3,000 asylum seekers have been housed in Glasgow, the majority in Sighthill.

Recently, the left in Scotland has been split by a dispute as to how to deal with racist attacks on Sighthill. In early June Glasgow City Council moved to evict a family whose members were engaged in persistent racial harassment of asylum seekers. The move to evict was opposed in an open letter signed by, amongst others, Scottish TUC General Secretary Bill Speirs MSP, Scottish Socialist Party main player Tommy Sheridan and Scottish CND secretary Tony Southall. The SSP's Scottish Socialist Voice argued "The SSP has highlighted the massive poverty that exists in areas

few laws against racism, and when a council tries to uphold one of them (and this happens once in a blue moon) we should be supporting that action." One Caucus member argued "*The left are really saying that racism, to an extent, is permissible on a housing scheme.*" John O, from the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns, wrote "*If Tommy Sheridan and all those who signed the letter will come and live in Sighthill and defend the asylum seekers from racists, then I am quite happy to stand shoulder to shoulder with them against evictions. If they won't, then I support Glasgow council in evicting the racists.*"

Leaving aside the tendency of some in the Scottish Socialist Party to see racism as some sort of problem confined to the nasty English, both sides, it ought to be clear, have missed the point. It would be easier to sympathise with the position of the SSP et al if it had any kind of logical consistency to it; if, for instance, as John O observes, they were involved in physical defence of asylum seekers, or if they had a policy of organising to resist evictions on Sighthill generally. It was the case, as the Independent Labour Party and the Communist Party showed with some success in the 1930s, that British Union of Fascist sympathisers could be won to embrace working class solidarity by not being excluded from its benefits when the CP and ILP mobilised against evictions or against bailiffs. The possibility of winning over the BUF sympathisers was predicated on maintenance of a level of consistent and successful activism in working class areas (see Joe Jacob's *Out of the Ghetto*, Phoenix Press 1991) not the kind of token gesture embodied in the SSP campaign.

What the SSP position represents is the slow recognition that all it has done before has helped fuel the chaos before it now. Those who support the evictions though, have not even grasped that. In the August/September issue of the Campaign Against Racism and Fascism's house journal, CARF comment that "*the council should have taken action long ago.*" They explain that "*The policy of evicting perpetrators of racist violence ...came about because black communities showed how local authorities had formerly perpetuated racial harassment through housing policies that led to "whites only" zones of housing and penalised the victims through their policy of removing them from estates.*" All true -but the strategy posed as solution mistakes cause for cure. The local state - which has in the past quite happily transferred victims of racism rather than confront racist families, is now seen as an ally of anti-racist struggle, and a force to be used against active racists. Thus, on the one side, a section of the left breaks from the identification of anti-racism with the state, but does so inconsistently, leaving itself open to accusations of "permissible racism", while on the other, anti-racists argue that the local state that exists to administer the poverty of areas like Sighthill, a state from which the majority of Sighthill tenants are entirely alienated, is somehow, a weapon in the struggle against racism.

It is possible, though, to argue for an entirely different approach. The left sees the racism of a minority of Sighthill tenants as a problem in isolation. Yet

whatever is said about asylum seekers in Sighthill was said first by the likes of Jack Straw and William Hague and echoed by the likes of the Scottish Sun, which headlined recently the news that "*Lorry loads of scroungers head for Britain to milk the system*" and the Glasgow Evening Times, which reported that there were "*gangs of refugees begging in the streets of Glasgow and reports of asylum seekers stealing from homes across Scotland.*"

racism of the British National Party today (or the BUF then) and that of New Labour and the Tories. Its purpose is the same - to break any identification based on class and replace it with one based on race. The difference is only that the BNP is allowed the masquerade of anti-establishment opposition, and therein, for the moment, lies its greatest benefit for capital -if the racism deployed by New Labour begins to fail to mask its anti-working class agenda, the BNP exists at present as a useful distraction to keep the proles looking the wrong way.

The lessons for anti-fascists are two fold. That any effective anti-fascism has to be seen to be opposed to the state, not in collusion with it. Moreover, just as it is not possible to employ a "colour-blind" class politics against the likes of the BNP - one that offers "unity" as a solution to class problems without establishing a political basis for that unity - neither is it possible to build an effective movement against racism and fascism outside and against the working class. "Colour blind" politics are doomed to fail when precisely the point of the BNP's success is its argument that "white communities are beginning to get restless over constant anti-white discrimination by local bureaucrats and councils" and that whites are "second class citizens" in their own land. Unless the idea of "whiteness" is problematised, we will get nowhere. Which whites are treated as second class citizens? The 40 year old who's not found work for 10 years or Sir Christopher Gent, earning £9m per year at Vodafone? Who has the power to render someone "second class" - the refugee in the flat next door or Blair, or the leader of Glasgow Council? What does the notion of "rights for whites" mean - do whites in Sighthill suffer from a denial of rights? Rights to what? To housing, employment, welfare? To a secure and happy life? Who then has the economic and political power to deny such rights? We'll get nowhere if we either duck these questions or blame the working class for seeking such solutions in the first place. Building an effective movement against racism and fascism will mean defending



...and then do nothing?

New Labour and its Murdoch-owned mouthpieces are quick to condemn asylum seekers as a drain on resources while forcing them to live on food vouchers and denying them the right to work. The whole thing is a set-up. The point of racism is - simply - to get the white working class - the *majority* of working class people - to identify with a notion of "Britishness" against an "alien" threat fabricated to cover over the divisions of class which have become gaping wounds in the last 20 years.

Racism is deployed by capital because it offers the prospect of struggle conducted as a war of "race against race" instead of "class against class". As Lesley Riddoch noted, in Business A.M., "*How come locals lash out at asylum seekers, but not at the government? If Gordon Brown's philosophy of tax carrots and benefit docking sticks has come unstuck in Sighthill, why don't people protest?*" (Business A.M. 9th August 2001.) Riddoch quotes one Sighthill resident claiming "*I'm getting evicted for two months of rent arrears and they're getting flats free.*" Therein is the point of the race card. Sighthill was poor before the decision was taken to house refugees there. There is no connection between poverty and poor housing and the presence of racial minorities. Neither is the racist conclusion one working class people leap to easily. Working class areas are, lets face it, the *only* genuinely racially integrated areas in this "tolerant" land. The racist "solution" is only taken up after a propaganda exercise on a massive scale by Blair, Straw, Hague, The Sun, The Mirror, et al.

In a copy of The Blackshirt from November 1933, the British Union of Fascists describe the use of the "blackshirt" symbol as "*bringing down one of the great barriers of class by removing differences of dress, and one of the objects of fascism is to break the barriers of class.*" What is significant in all this is solely the notion that the point of fascism is to break the barrier of class - to break any sense of identification with one class as against another. In a real sense there is no difference between the



Paul Golding - BNP Director of Publicity and a definite mummy's boy

asylum seekers from attack and defending council tenants from eviction. It will mean reforging a class-based alliance between asylum seekers and working class whites on the simple basis that asylum seekers have been dumped on estates like Sighthill not to look down on the existing tenants but because



...but on what terms?

such as Sighthill...*The attempted eviction of a local family in Sighthill will not stop a single racist attack. Glasgow City Council should look at the explosion of race riots in England and think again before fanning the flames of racism in Glasgow.*"

In response, the STUC's Black Workers Caucus argued that "*There are precious*

Glagow City Council, and New Labour think both asylum seekers and white working class tenants are shit and deserve to live in shit. Upon the recognition of that fact solidarity can be built.

There is, though, an issue which we cannot avoid, however much we try. John O's comment that Tommy Sheridan and co should "come and live in Sighthill and defend the asylum seekers from racists" inadvertently hits the nail on the head. The anti racist revolutionary left (including the anarchist movement) does not for the most part live on estates like Sighthill. Many residents on Sighthill will never have seen a representative of "the left" until asylum seeker Fisat Yildiz Dag was murdered. The connection between the working class and the left has been broken and however much some of us keep raising the fact, the rest are happy to ignore it, resting secure in the illusion that a middle class movement against the worst effects of "globalisation" can ever be an effective anti-capitalist resistance.

In the August issue of the BNP magazine *Identity*, BNP Director of Publicity Paul Golding outlines the party's strategy for the 2002 council elections. "The first stage involves the careful and calculated identification of the particular council seat that is the most fertile ground for us...Most important...you must find a ward that is, or used to be, rock solid old Labour. There are thousands of white working class wards with high levels of poverty, job insecurity and council neglect that show better than any academic political study the way in which New Labour has abandoned its traditional supporters. This is the political space in which we will get our first electoral breakthrough." The second stage-constituency identified is to "aim to become a recognised local political force, a credible alternative to the rest." The basis for this is to "find out what issues concern local people... The key difference is that (other parties) ask people to tell them what's wrong, while our more positive approach asks what they want to see BNP councillors put right."

If we want to defeat the BNP before they get the chance to transform themselves into a respectable and successful party of the European new right - before they follow the successes of Haider and Le Pen with successes of their own -we have to match them in ambition and outflank them in the battle for that political space which is the alienated - now anti-Labour working class. It comes to something when it takes the BNP to show remind us that the working class ought to be our constituency -that working class discontent and mobilisation is the essential precondition for meaningful change -and that if we want to gain the political respect of the working class - black and white- in areas like Sighthill - it has to involve :

1. Making the effort to find out what their concerns are

2. Working concretely to show our politics can make a difference. Its tempting to say its never too late to learn - but if the far right continue to gain in areas like Sighthill, and we continue to think our current practice has any relevance there, then one day it will be. Fascism does not begin with concentration camps - that's where it ends.

You Can't Fool All The People All Of The Time

"The abysmal turnout sends a warning to politicians that the people are losing faith in them. There is an overriding imperative to restore honesty and honour to public life and to consign spin - a coy word for lies and deceit - to the dustbin"

The real story of the 2001 general election was, as Tory Ann Widdecombe identifies above, the record low turn out. That only 59% of those eligible bothered to vote, a figure that fell well below 50% in many working class areas, shows that you can fool some people some of the time, but you cannot fool all the people all of the time. Faced with a choice between a right wing Labour party and a right wing Tory party, a day spent on the sofa watching anything other than election coverage was a far more attractive alternative. Who would bet against the turn out falling below 50% next time round?

Leaving aside John Prescott's fight with a member of the Countryside Alliance, one of the few occasions the Labour camp looked uncomfortable during the campaign came shortly before polling, presumably when predictions of a low turn out had become evident. Then members of all three main parties seemed to unite in a brief outbreak of consensus, imploring people to vote, even if it was

not for them.

Following the election, Blair ordered the Electoral Commission to look into the "disappointing" turnout. Anybody who has followed government appointed reports into rail disasters or civil disturbances will know that they often take a year or more to produce any paper, and serve mainly to take the sting out of controversy by deferring difficult decisions to a year or later down the road.

All the more surprising then that the Electoral Commission reported within two



Horror for Tony Blair and Gisela Stewart MP as they meet a working class person

months. Typically its recommendations focus not on the core problem - politicians and liberal democracy itself, but on problems of presentation. Its chairman, Sam Young, wants to make "voting easier and more user friendly" - but what is hard about entering a booth and using a pencil to write an X? Mr

Young goes on to call for voting by Internet or over the phone and a concerted campaign to encourage more young people and more black people to vote.

The whole report is evidence of how strongly the New Labour ethos - that presentation is all - has fluctuated through the civil service. None of the recommendations address the core issues - that people do not trust or like politicians and that there might actually be good reason for this. Indeed the Electoral Commission seems barely aware that energetic campaigns like Operation Black Vote have been going for years, with commendable resistance from the stay at home voters of the black community. The more persistently various popstars and the National Union of Students call for young people to vote, the more desperate it all sounds. When the report suggests that a televised debate between the party leaders would be beneficial, it is hard to suppress our laughter.

In the 1960s hippies used to speculate what would happen if the government called a war and nobody turned up to fight. What would happen if they call a general election and we all Vote for Nobody?

For more information on the Vote for Nobody campaign visit : <http://uk.geocities.com/votenobody>

QUOTES

"All the headway since 1997 has been made by the pro-hunting side. The paradox of the thing is that there has never been a period in which more people have been interested in, and pro-hunting"

- Daily Telegraph editor and hunt follower **Charles Moore** in The Field, July 2001. When will groups like the Hunt Saboteurs Association understand that the fight against hunting is a political one and that groups like the Countryside Alliance have to be fought politically as well as physically.

"If that's the way they want to play it they will be arrested and taken before the courts. They have got to understand that they will not be able to get away with that activity and they are one of two or three organisations who are hell bent on causing injury and mayhem"

- Do they mean us? Met Police Commissioner **Sir John Stevens** discussing Class War on BBC2s Newsnight on 25 April 2001.

Mind Your Language

A translation of the "This Is Class War" column in this paper, and a translation of the subscription details are now available in Swedish. We hope to make Class War literature available in further languages over the next few years. We are also looking into the possibility of making Class War available on cassette tape at some stage in the future.

A Statement From The Class War Shadow Minister For Agriculture

Farmers - dontcha just hate the whinging scum? Five suicides a week is nothing to be proud of - what happened to their productivity - aint their slurry pits or silos deep enough to accommodate more of the snivelling rural retard?

Foot and mouth - dontcha just love it! What a class conscious virus! Badminton Horse Trials CANCELLED. Fox Hunting season CANCELLED The Countryside Alliance march CANCELLED Queen Mum DISINFECTED The Six Nations Rugby Union CANCELLED. What a result! Meanwhile football, darts, snooker, all completely unaffected! This is germ warfare with a political consciousness, bubonic Bolshevism! Hats off to our comrades in the Ramblers Association for ignoring the threatened fines and

insisting on their continued right to roam and spread the virus to new areas as every class conscious citizen should! Be sure to take the whole family - especially free ranging dogs - and have a good laugh at farmers topping themselves from every hop pole!

Foot and mouth tours definitely on this weekend! Meet 9am at Pigswill abattoir. Proceed past "Keep Out Dangerous Disease" signs to Pussywill Farm then on to Blackberry Farm to view the funeral pyres of suicidal farmers. Lunch at the Jolly Farmer before taking a packed lunch of infected Mongolian beef pate sandwiches to feed the local livestock. Afternoon - free to roam at will before returning home to watch the cancellation of Royal Ascot live on TV.

Join Class War!

Class War membership costs £12 per calendar year (£6 unwaged) and is open to anybody who agrees with our politics and has been in touch with local Class War group for 3 months. Drop us a line to get involved!

Advertisement



In the Hands of the Enemy

(£6 Cheques to Justice for Mark Barnsley, PO Box 381, Huddersfield HD1)

The title of this collection of articles and addresses comes from a line in Alexander Berkman's classic '*Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*'. Any working class person who comes up against the criminal justice system finds themselves in the hands of the enemy, more so if that person has a long history of political activism. Mark Barnsley is such a person.

This book has sections penned by those who knew Mark before his imprisonment, friends and family and those who have come to know him since.

The various accounts point to an ordinary working class man, but one with a strong sense of social justice, which has not been eclipsed by the years spent in jail. Those who have shared prison experience with Mark tell the story of a man who has gained respect from other inmates wherever he has been sent, for the dignity he shows while all the time refusing to bow the knee by maintaining his innocence.

The fact that so many who did not know Mark prior to this nightmare have felt inspired to act on his behalf, in some cases jeopardising their own liberty, tells us of the respect he has come to be held in. That many of these people are not professional writers shows through on occasion but the book is all the better for that. These are honest pieces written from the heart about a man whose case deserves to be more widely known. Anger is a common thread throughout this book. Anger at a system which has banged up an innocent man and anger at the way sections of the left and anarchist movement have ignored the campaign to get justice for that man. As one campaigner put it, 'Perhaps we should tell people he is a rabbit and they put shampoo in his eyes'.

This book will arouse indignation against a system which can treat ordinary people in such a way. It will also inspire others to take up the campaign for justice, not only for Mark Barnsley, but for victims of miscarriages of justice everywhere.

The state has scored an own goal in fitting up Mark Barnsley. It sought to silence one voice, but here in this book are many mouths which have opened in his support and which will encourage others to the campaign to clear his name. A campaign which must continue after his release if need be.

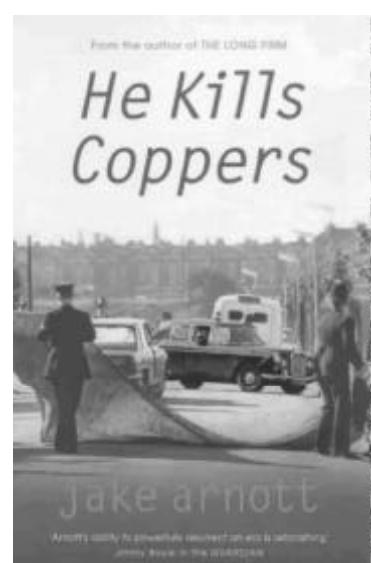
BOOK REVIEWS

He Kills Coppers

by Jake Arnott (Sceptre, £10)

Arnott's second novel takes its title from the ever popular song about your friend and mine, Harry Roberts. Roberts, re-named Billy Porter is one of three core characters - the others a policeman struggling to avoid the corruption of the Met, and a particularly odious tabloid journalist - who's lives are followed from the 1960s to the 1980s.

By taking historical characters and renaming them for fictional stories (Arnott's previous novel *The Long Firm* was clearly based on the Kray Twins) one of the essential requirements for a novelist - the need to create believable characters - is removed. Equally Arnott seems incapable of writing about women, who are absent from the book virtually throughout. You do not have to be that well read to discover that Arnott has digested books like *The Fall Of Scotland Yard* by Cox, Shirley and Short, *Anarchist* by Ian Bone or that he watched the BBC series *Our Friends In The North* on video a few times before putting pen to paper.



That said the book does take you into and give you a feel for 1960s London. Moving on from the 60s, it stands (and falls) on its twist surrounding one of the three central characters. Its observations of the 1980s Anarchist scene (and Class War) are somewhat predictable and lazy - all the more disappointing in that no Anarchist group has tried harder to avoid a 'crustie' image than Class War, and that Arnott himself was allegedly involved in the movement during the 1980s.

There is a great book to be written about Harry Roberts, both as an individual and how he impacted on the lives of others. This is not it.

Whether as an author Arnott is more than a one trick pony it is too soon to tell, although the planned televising of *The Long Firm* will no doubt guarantee best seller status for this and subsequent books.



Joint Review

"Rank and File or Broad Left? A Short History of the Building Worker Group"

by Brian Higgins, RPM no. 8, Revolutions Per Minute, BCM Box 3328, London, WC1N 3XX. £2 plus 50p postage and packaging, or £1 to building workers. Trades union branches and local community groups can have 10 or more copies at £1 each plus postage. 83 pages.

"Empire"

by Michael Hardt & Antonio [Tony] Negri, Harvard University Press, 2000. £30. 478 pages. From all good bookshops, or Class War will try to get you one.

"Rank and File" is a pamphlet & a very interesting account of organising amongst the working class from the early 1970s onwards. Its written by a guy involved in many of the events that include Special Branch arrests on the picket line and imprisonment without trial that looks very like internment, many other run ins with the legal system, trade union bureaucracy, and people paid to attack workers in struggle.

This largely hidden history would of course be totally unexpected in the virtual Spiceworld the media continually portray as modern Britain. Not only this, this pamphlet and the practice of the Building worker group is a frontal attack on the discredited industrial policy of the Socialist Workers Party. There is an amusing tale about how Tony Cliff, SWP leader at the time, was seen out of a meeting by all the workers there! Not one stood in his defence and this was as early as 1982. So much for class consciousness, eh Comrade?

Interestingly this pamphlet also carries a prominent call for Republicanism to be central to any understanding of the dynamic necessary for all out struggle that can't be derailed by "the very British, Loyal and Bureaucratic Popular Front".

Overall this is a realistic assessment of struggles, successful, not so successful and failures - as it happens in the real world. This really is interesting reading and essential for those who want to learn and participate in building worker struggles.

This pamphlet describes the forms of spontaneous organisation for working class advance outside of the control of any would be mediators between the workers and management. Whether this is the Trade Union bureaucracy or broad leftism that ends up as a conservative force that limits the spreading of disputes or sells them out.

Finally the pamphlet says that a general umbrella Rank and File organisation with a common platform is necessary linking up the particular rank and files organisations that have as their focus maximum action and organisation. This is worthwhile stuff and can be fully endorsed without reservations, as this is a direction of struggle that offers a real permanent revolution. Although it looks on paper little different to anarcho-syndicalist approach to workplace organisation, and it is a shame that there were no direct comparisons made in the pamphlet.

The following book talks about the American version of this, one of the most successful examples of the syndicalist approach, and that is the International

Workers of the World - the Wobblies. Also the political and economic stage of industrial capitalism had reached in the early 20th century that made syndicalism a relevant mass tactic then was not outlined. It doesn't mention that their organisation was smashed by the government forces and confrontational new laws passed to defeat them either. According to Hardt and Negri their class conscious revolutionary militant of today is part of the multitude of the poor, ever present throughout history and the revolutionary subjectivity is typified by:

"the militant agitator of the Industrial Workers of the World. The wobbly constructed associations among working people from below, through continuous agitation, and while organising them gave rise to utopian thought and revolutionary knowledge."

They make the crucial distinction that revolutionary activity today

"must rediscover what has always been its proper form: not representational but constituent activity. Militancy today is a positive, constructive, and innovative activity".

This is something that Class War has always striven towards, however imperfectly at times.

This leads us further into Hardt and Negri's book, "**Empire**", that clearly blows the previous global movements primer - Naomi Klein's inaccurate and journalistic "*No Logo*" - out of the water. This is a heavyweight tour de force & some readers of Class War will be familiar with Negri's work from the autonomous tradition in the hot years of 1970s Italy. Briefly this book covers the development of the new world order, or '*Empire*' as the authors call it.

After detailed description of this new world order the potential opposition is talked about. There are several elements of the oppositional strategy of refusal based upon the immediate realisation that all forms of capital and property are political, and hence become targets. All sections of society - economic, judicial, media and others come under the label political and hence looked at as a force for the oppressors rather than the liberal version of impartial bearers of judgements and news.

In Italy in the 1970s loads of bosses, politicians and other immediate oppressors of the working class were attacked and their cars burnt with petrol bombs, not as the activity of a terrorist sect but as the mass and integrated action of the dynamic working class.

Recently it has become obvious that these different sections media, police, and judiciary are all working against the progress of the anti capitalist movement so there is clear relevance for our movement. As Class War has always insisted, the working class is what the working class does in a progressive sense. People cease to work in the general interest of all working class people [and hence cease to deserve the label working class] when they adopt actions and ideas e.g. racism, that go against the social practices of a dynamic and totalising working class. At the end of the day that is the category that has the potential to unite us all.



for Brian Higgins



for Empire

"Preliminary report on the shooting of Derek Bennett"

from *The Movement For Justice, PO Box 27497, London SW9 7HU*

Whilst Class War has political differences with the Movement for Justice this report is to be applauded, firstly for keeping the behaviour of police Armed Response Units in the public eye, and secondly for reminding the cops in London that they cannot spin their way out of every crisis. The highlight is a masterly analysis of police and guns by Jim Wills, a friend of the late Harry Stanley. Whoever armed police units are serving, it does not appear to be the public.



Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon

(18, General Release)

This is the martial arts film, made in the traditional cultural style of China. It must rate with classics like *The Seven Samurai* made in the 1930s. It makes no concessions whatever to western audiences - offering no explanations for example as to why characters can apparently fly. For those unfamiliar with the legend of Monkey and other Chinese martial art heroes this must have been puzzling. On the other hand this film, like much else in ancient Chinese philosophy, can be understood on many levels and enjoyed on each. The Kung Fu action is dazzling and we get to see first hand how those baffling ancient Chinese weapons were actually used. This is a film to own on video and must be seen more than once to appreciate its full brilliance. I would not recommend trying any of the stunts at home though - running up the outside of the house could be dangerous and will certainly annoy the neighbours.



Enemy At The Gates

(18, General video release)

The Battle of Stalingrad remains the warfare's bloodiest, most intense battle. Perhaps realising the impossibility of covering such a conflict in a broad picture, this film focuses on the personal conflict between a peasant from the Urals who becomes a hero of the Soviet Union for his sniping skills, and the German aristocrat who is sent to kill him. Jude Law, who last seen throwing queenie tantrums as Lord Alfred Douglas in *Wilde*, plays the Soviet sharpshooter who keeps his humanity but struggles to maintain his confidence as the German net grows tighter.

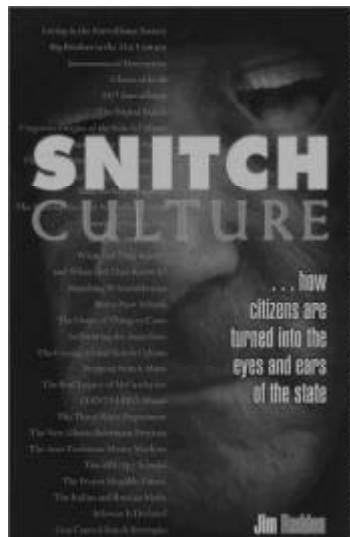
Bob Hoskins is also brilliant as Kruschev, attempting to focus only on victory when barbarism is all around him. Just as fascinating are the small details about life in Stalingrad that are dropped into the film, the partying soldiers knowing that death awaits the next day. See it.



Snitch Culture - How Citizens Are Turned Into the Eyes and Ears of the State.

By Jim Redden (Feral House, £12.95)

Although written by an American for a US audience, there is, sadly, much in this book relevant to British readers. The desire of governments to catalogue and inspect their citizens is universal, and whilst America may have a slight head start in technological monitoring, you can bet Europe is not far behind. We may not have gone as far as the US school system, which encourages children to report their parents for taking drugs in the home, but British citizens are now continuously encouraged to phone hotlines grassing up neighbours, friends and family. The Stasi society is here.



A crucial element in any snitch society is the media. Redden gives examples of quite outrageous falsehoods being pushed by the American police into the laps of willing journalists about political activists. This has a direct echo with the coverage of May Day 2000 and May Day 2001 here. Exaggerated media stories are then used to justify continued police harassment and arrests of demonstrators. The British police appear well versed in the tactics of their American cousins.

The spying of the supposed anti-racist groups the Anti-Defamation League and the Southern Poverty Law Centre on political activists of the right and left has clear echoes of the British "anti-fascist" magazine *Searchlight*. The ADL was discovered by the San Francisco District Attorney's Office to be holding files on four categories of protestor - "Arab" "PINKO" "Right" and "Skin".

Where civil rights legislation prevents the authorities from monitoring political activists they just pay an advocacy group to do it for them. When the anti-capitalist movement took off in America the ADL was on hand to advise local police departments on how they could ban protesters from wearing masks, under laws designed to disrupt Ku Klux Klan activity. By 2000, the SPLC had begun reporting on the anti-globalisation movement eager to find 'evidence' of its links to the far-right.

If there is one criticism of Redden's book it is of the ultimately depressing tone. He tells us much of what is being done to us, but little of what we can do about it.



Wish You Were Here?

Class War couldn't help but go and have a look at the newly advertised holiday playground for the children of the super rich and royalty. In the newspapers this place has been revealed as Rock on the north coast of Cornwall with its' surfing, sailing and partying. We went with eager anticipation of viewing some really nice scenery, cocaine, champagne and loads of posh housing but were disappointed by what we found. There were very few shops or pubs (just one) on the main drag and to be honest little to distinguish it from many other nice places in Cornwall. We were also looking forward to financing our visit with a little taxing of the rich Hoi Polloi but they were nowhere to be found and we therefore suspect some lazy journalists are being fed some dubious material by their children. Verdict - Boring.



Rogue States : The Rule Of Force In World Affairs

by Noam Chomsky (Pluto Press, £10.99)

This book is the result of Chomsky's tireless efforts to measure the world's superpowers by their own standards and to hold them responsible for the acts they commit in the name of their people. The US and her allies come in for particular scrutiny for their numerous blatant violations of the very international laws they claim to uphold. With analysis of the US bombing campaign against Iraq, NATO's intervention in Kosovo, US support for the regime in East Timor and the political crisis in Columbia. He questions the rhetoric of Western foreign policy to reveal the insidious interests behind insupportable actions from crippling economic sanctions to surgical military strikes.



Noam Chomsky

Throughout the book Chomsky reveals the USA's open dismissal of UN resolutions, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and legal precedent. His analysis of US statecraft and war mongering reveals that the rule of law has been reduced to a mere nuisance in the United States brazen bid for the title - rogue state.



Class Pride Worldwide

(CD, Insurgence Records. www.insurgence.net)

This is a compilation of Oi or Streetpunk. Less well known groups like Ya Basta from France and Basque Redskins OPC10 K-95 share space with better known bands such as Class War favourites The Oppressed and Blaggers I.T.A. German band Stagebottles also play an excellent number "Dead But Not Forgiven" dedicated to the superior driving skills of British nazi Ian Stuart Donaldson. All in all this is well worth the hard earned dosh of any militant anti-fascist. Play loudly before going out to kick boneheads.



Jurassic Park 3

(PG, General Release)

I took six kids from my street to see the film, aged between 7 and 12. I had been told the PG certificate was to low for what was a very scary film. PG probably is too low, but not because its too scary the only time the little buggers sat down and shut up was during the rip roaring head pulling, stamping, killing bits. These drew comments of 'cool' and 'brilliant'. But as soon as the talking started on screen this was an excuse for chattering and numerous trips to the toilet.

Jurassic Park tends to be a bit too talky for young kids before the action starts. He film is basically a remake of the first film, the same sets revisited by bigger louder and more dynamic creatures. It is streets better than the sequel and most of the kids thought it better than the first one, probably because it had less talking in it.

Star survivor of the film is the mobile phone which survives a plane crash, being eaten by a dinosaur, being passed through its guts and shitted out into a rain forest in a pile of monster dung, before being in a ship wreck. The reception perfect despite it all. Not like any mobile I've ever had!



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The Union Makes Us Rich

The Communication Workers Union has something in the region of 300,000 members. These are spread over counter staff, former GiroBank staff, now employed by the Alliance and Leicester, Parcelforce Telecom and Royal Mail. The postmen and women of Royal Mail are the staff the public come into most contact with and the most militant in terms of industrial action. It is said, not without a certain amount of pride, that C.W.U. members are responsible for over 50% of industrial action in Britain.

The vast majority of these actions are classed as 'unofficial'. They are also taken as much against the dealings of the union itself as against heavy handed management. The union leadership have come to be seen as management stooges especially since the so called 'Way Forward' deal was pushed through in a joint C.W.U./management exercise at the second attempt.

The C.W.U. in it's various previous guises (Union of Postal Workers, Union of Communication Workers) is famous for never paying a penny in strike pay. Lately, it is also famous for condemning 'unofficial' industrial action no matter how justified, in order to escape the sequestration of it's funds. Often the speed of the condemnation is embarrassing and here we might possibly have the reason why.

In the year ending December 2000, ten national officers received salaries in excess of £65,000 each. The breakdown is as follows:-

Small wonder sphincter muscles begin to twitch at the first whisper of revolt amongst the ever more dumped on rank and file. The average postie gets around £13,000 a year. Obviously this will increase with overtime payments, but outside of larger towns, opportunity for overtime is fairly rare. Combined with the reduction in overtime rates which the 'Way Forward' brought about, earnings from overtime are further cut back.

Billy Hayes recently took over as General Secretary of the C.W.U. One



fat cats in the union movement

time left-wing militant Billy, was noted for dodging the question of whether he would accept the pay that goes with the 'job' at meetings in the run up to his election.

These former working class heroes now have nothing in common with those they allegedly represent. No wonder they feel at home rubbing shoulders with the higher echelons of Royal Mail management. (Or Consignia to the brain dead.)

Champaign socialism is one thing, but these class traitors seem to have access to the cellar. Spare a thought while your postie is out on a Saturday morning delivering half a rain forest of useless shite getting piss wet through.

D.G. Hodgson	General Secretary	£ 93,238
J.G. Keggie.	Deputy General Secretary	£102,185
S. Bridge.	Assistant Secretary.	£ 87,151
W. Hayes.	Assistant Secretary	£ 83,672
M.J. Hogan	Assistant Secretary	£ 95,817
A.P. Kearns	Assistant Secretary.	£ 90,960
E.J. Lovett	Assistant Secretary	£ 92,712
A. McGuinness	Assistant Secretary	£ 90,089
A. Rupa	Assistant Secretary	£ 65,596
K. Shaw	Assistant Secretary.	£ 92,120

These figures do not include expenses.

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POLITICAL LEVY - UNION MEMBERS REALISE ITS TIME TO STOP FUNDING PHONY TONY

Financial backing of the Labour Party by trade unions has been in the news again. Tony Blair's drive to involve private companies in public services has seen the G.M.B. threaten to cut up to one million pounds in donations to Labour over the next four years.

Time will tell if the G.M.B. will carry out it's threat. The likelihood is that as the next election approaches, the G.M.B. leadership will bottle out and hand over huge sums of it's members cash so that Blair can stamp on their heads for another four or five years. Two things stand out about this business. The first is that the move to stop the donations appears to be supported by the majority of members. The second is the muted reaction from Millbank to the news.

No doubt at the grassroots level, the unrequited love which trade unionists have shown towards Labour for the last 100 years is on the wane. While their leaders may be courted by Blair and Prescott, no such consideration is shown to the rank and file. Apart from one spokesman appearing on Channel 4 News wittering on about 'blackmail', the response from Labour showed a certain sang froid. Blair has not spent the past seven years creeping around big business for donations to be bothered by threats to withhold union donations. Until now.

Other unions, notably the Fire Brigades Union and the Communication Workers Union have since discussed withholding money from the political fund to Labour. In fact the idea that the money be rerouted to '*parties whose political aims are more in line with trade union members aspirations*' has been suggested from more than one conference platform. Needless to say, the Socialist Alliance has jumped on this bandwagon and wishes to take advantage of any moves which would see union cash directed away from Labour. After years of campaigning to keep the trade union-Labour Party link, the Trots seem now to want to see it ended, but only if they can benefit financially.

At the time of the 1997 General Election, membership of the Labour Party stood at over 400,000. By the time of the 2001 election, this had almost halved, even under the quaint Labour way of counting which includes people who left the party months before and others who are often well over a year behind with their subscriptions and have no intention of ever renewing them.

Not only have many of the most active members deserted, those left find they have no motivation to work for Blair and his Thatcherite agenda. The 2001 Labour vote of just 25% of the UK population can be split down into those who still think Labour is worth voting for, and those whose only reason for voting Labour was to keep the Tories out. Hardly the politics of contentment Jack Straw boasted of and certainly not a mandate for further privatisation of public services.

Labour's politics are deeply unpopular with the working class who bear the brunt of it's policies in the form of the widening gap between rich and poor. As the now left-wing hero Roy Hattersley recently stated, the original

aim of Labour was the redistribution of wealth. None of the founders ever envisaged the wealth would be redistributed upwards under a Labour Government, but it has. Hattersley has assumed the mantle of Blair's enemy, but lets not be fooled. Hattersley was part and parcel of the whole New Labour concept dating back to the man who paved the way for it, Neil Kinnock. Once a fat fraud, always a fat fraud.

Now Labour has now been forced to ask the Co-Op Bank to increase it's overdraft. They are planning on



Put it in your pocket, not Phony Tony!

moving out of Millbank and setting up headquarters on Tyneside to exploit the lower pay workers in the regions receive compared to their London counterparts. Odd then that a M.P. in the north receives the same pay as one in the south east, but a worker doesn't.

This state of affairs has come about since Labour reportedly spent close on it's fourteen million pounds maximum on the election campaign and has had to pay off it's costs for the campaign within a 42 day limit which the last Labour Government passed as legislation, hoping to hit the Tories while they were having financial difficulties themselves.

Obviously at the time of the legislation, the idea of seven million workers having part of their subscriptions sent off unquestioningly to Labour for all time must have had a bearing on Labour planning. This was before Blair once again settled down to a second term of carrying out his attack on public services. Since then we have witnessed further industrial action from postal workers and fire-fighters and the closure of schools and lengthening of hospital waiting lists.

Now conference season sees the calls for suspending or even totally withdrawing donations to Labour grow louder. No doubt such calls will be thwarted by union leaders who know which side their bread is buttered on. The good news is that every individual trade union member has the right to withdraw that portion of their subscriptions which goes to fund Blair and his business friends for themselves without any Labour leaning union conference getting in the way.

If you don't like Blair or his Mark II Tory programme simply write to The Organising Secretary at your respective union headquarters and copy your letter to the wages department telling them that under Section 32A of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, you wish to opt out of paying the political levy. It's a piece of legislation Blair is happy to use against trade unions. Why not get your own back by using it against him. Don't pay for any political party to rule your life, keep your money for yourself.



"Rotten Robbie"

Most football mascots are, lets face it extremely sad. But even hardened haters of this fad have been shocked at just how crap second division Bury's mascot is.

"Robbie the Bobby" is named after the nineteenth century Bury born politician Sir Robert Peel. Who he? By our estimate Peel can lay claim to being the worst British politician ever to take office having given us both income tax and the Metropolitan Police! Some legacy to get young kids cheering!

We are pleased to report that stewards ejected Robbie from the Bury v Stoke City game in September. After Stoke fans had baited him, he pretended to moon at them. Lets keep up the abuse and keep him out permanently!

QUOTES

"The government has given subsidies to the private coal owners and they have compensated the farming industry. Surely they should compensate people who gave their lives to this industry? Our old members want justice now, not when they are dead. Perhaps direct action is needed to remind the new Labour hierarchy that thousands of our people cannot wait any longer for compensation."

David Hopper, General Secretary of the Durham NUM, in his message to this years Durham Miners gala, on the subject of industrial diseases.

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Film To Be Made Of The 5-1 Massacre

Hollywood to make film of Munich Victory...

Universal Pictures announced today they plan to make a film of the momentous football match that took place on 1 September in Germany. "Five-One" is the tentative title of what could be next year's big summer hit, depicting the American soccer team's stunning victory over Germany.

Nicolas Cage heads an all star cast, as the captain of the brave US Soccer team haunted by the trauma of losing in the 2000 World Cup final on penalties and the death of his wife in a riot caused by English football hooligans. Cage finds love in the arms of a female sports journalist played by Julia Roberts. Mel Gibson is the no-nonsense Swedish coach who leads them to glory, with Keanu Reeves, Ben Affleck, Matt Damon and Will Smith playing some of Cage's heroic team mates.

Jeremy Irons is set to star as Sir Nigel Villiers-Smythe, the dastardly Englishman who coaches the German team and forces them to play with poisoned-tipped studs to try and cheat the heroic American team out of victory.



Will Smith puts the USA 2-1 up in Germany

Director Steven Spielberg defended the film-makers' decision to focus on the American contribution to the victory over Germany and inaccurate and even imagined events in the story. Football is even referred to as soccer throughout the picture. He commented "obviously we've had to take some artistic license to make the story work on film, but I hope that what we produce will be true to the spirit of what happened on that famous night".

Game For A Laugh

Is it possible to combine the brain numbing addiction of computer games with class struggle politics? Check the cobble throwing game at www.subversiv.nu/ and find out!

Football Pays The Penalty

The penalty shoot out is now part and parcel of football. However until last season's play off debacle at Preston, when Trevor Francis led his Birmingham team off the pitch, nearly all supporters believed the location of the penalty shoot out was decided by the tossing of a coin. That is the only fair way to make such a decision.

Now it appears that the decision is reached by the referee, in conjunction with the local police and the stadium safety official. This is inherently biased towards the home club and is a scandalous state of affairs. Who changed the rules and when?

The local police will inevitably side with the home club. The stadium safety official, as an employee of the home club is hardly likely to argue for the kicks to be in front of the travelling support. Faced by any 'safety' or 'security' argument, the referee is again almost certain to place the kicks at the home end. Put it this way, under these 'rules' an FA Cup replay at Highbury between Arsenal and Macclesfield is 99% certain to see the kicks taken at the North Bank rather than the Clock End. Where's the fairness in that?

The whole situation is another example of interference in the game, in the name of security, by non-football authorities (the abandonment of FA Cup second replays, and FA Cup semi-final replays at police insistence being other recent examples) By throwing his toys out of the pram at Deepdale, Trevor Francis at least brought this issue into the public domain.

CAN IT PAULO

Class War were amused to see a joint poster by the Professional Footballers Association and the Let's Kick Racism Out of Football campaign. Who should be gracing the poster but West Ham winger Paulo Di Canio. Alongside Di Canio and various stars of the Premier League is the slogan "It's only the colour of the shirt that counts"

In Di Canio's recent autobiography he talks candidly about his right wing beliefs and his fascination with Mussolini. The PFA and the extremely well funded Kick It Out campaign seem to be unaware that on this issue at least Paulo would appear to agree with them. It is the colour of the shirt that is important - and that shirt is most definitely black.



His mouth is open, but is his brain in gear?

QUOTES

"Anne Robinson: What French word did Karl Marx use to describe those who oppressed the working class?"

Contestant: Trotskyists."

A contestant on the BBCs The Weakest Link. Private Eye reprinted this hilarious exchange in their Dumb Britain column (20 April 2001) it does not sound so stupid to us!

Rugby's Class War

by David Hinchliffe M.P.
£9.75p ISBN 1-903659-00-0

Rugby League is very much a working class game and therefore it seems strange these days to find a Labour M.P. championing its cause. This book charts some of the battles League has had to fight down the years since it broke away from the Rugby Football Union over payment of players in 1895. The prevailing attitude at that time being that only those well off enough not to have to sell their labour to survive should pay. Hence, Rugby Union became the game of 'the gentry' and their university educated offspring whilst the workers were left to their Association and League Football which thrived side by side and as far back as late Victorian times often shared the same grounds.

Anarchists might find the niceties of the parliamentary system described in the book somewhat tedious, but for the rugby enthusiasts among us, this book is worth a look.

The sham amateurism which was part and parcel of Rugby Union hypocrisy while they banned League players as professional is nothing short of comical. The twisting and turning of the Colonel (and Air-Commodore) Blimp's down at Twickenham along with their friends in the southern based newspapers as they threw any obstacle in the way of Rugby League development would leave any stand-off half in the shade. When even northern editions of The Guardian can give three pages to club Rugby Union matches and only one to League, it is little wonder thirty thousand people can sign a petition in just a couple of weeks deplored the lack of media attention for the team sport which comes second only to soccer in attendance figures.

The banning of Rugby League by the collaborationist Vichy government in France at the request of the French R.U. gets a mention.

Then along comes Rupert Murdoch, wallet open, to tempt the top men in both codes and almost throw out a century of tradition. Maurice Lindsey of the Rugby League appeared willingness to ditch old established clubs to get hold of Sky Sports millions showed that while 'old farts' might run the Rugby Union green eyed grabbers infest League.

Lindsay seemed unable to grasp that to the natives of the likes of Featherstone, Wakefield, Widnes and Leigh, Rugby League had come to symbolise more than just a game. As Thatcher shut down the pits and factories of northern England, it became the one source of pride in the affected towns.

Rugby has always been political. The Rugby Union tours of South Africa during apartheid had no League equivalent. It took the "rah, rah, kick and clap brigade" of the RFU until the late 1980's to select its first black international player. Rugby League was decades ahead of them. The book is aptly titled for it has been a class war played out for over a hundred years both on and off the pitch, and it shows little sign of coming to an end. Apart from anything else, it explodes the myths which the establishment has fostered about Rugby League, its players and supporters for so long.